

PLEASANTS COUNTY SCHOOLS



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Revised August 2016

DISTRICT WEBSITE

Employees are encouraged to utilize our district website as a source of information related to the overall operations and functions of our school system.

<http://www.pleasantcountyschools.com/>

Board of Education Policies, Meeting Agendas and Minutes

<http://www.pleasantcountyschools.com/BoardAgendasandMinutes.aspx>

District Job Descriptions

<http://www.pleasantcountyschools.com/JobDescriptions.aspx>

Personnel Employment Process & Forms

<http://www.pleasantcountyschools.com/Employment.aspx>

FOREWORD

Under the supervision of the superintendent and in accordance with the West Virginia School Laws, the Superintendent assumes administrative and instructional supervisory responsibility for the planning, management, operation and evaluation of the total educational program of our schools and departments. This employee handbook has been prepared to provide you with general information concerning your rights, responsibilities and benefits as well as an employee framework of our organizational system. It is also designed to help you understand how Pleasants County Schools conducts business. This electronic handbook is to be used as a supplemental guide in addition to all West Virginia School Laws, West Virginia State Board of Education Policies and Pleasants County Policies.

As an employee of our district, you join an outstanding team of individuals who demonstrate an unyielding commitment to delivering a high quality education program for the students and citizens of Pleasants County. Accordingly, you are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in the performance of your duties as defined in the §126-162-4 Employee Code of Conduct as follows:

All West Virginia school employees shall:

- exhibit professional behavior by showing positive examples of preparedness, communication, fairness, punctuality, attendance, language, and appearance;
- contribute, cooperate, and participate in creating an environment in which all employees/students are accepted and are provided the opportunity to achieve at the highest levels in all areas of development;
- maintain a safe and healthy environment, free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, substance abuse, and/or violence, and free from bias and discrimination;
- create a culture of caring through understanding and support;
- immediately intervene in any code of conduct violation, that has a negative impact on students, in a manner that preserves confidentiality and the dignity of each person;
- demonstrate responsible citizenship by maintaining a high standard of conduct, self-control, and moral/ethical behavior; and
- comply with all Federal and West Virginia laws, policies, regulations and procedures.

In order to accomplish our mission, principals must provide effective leadership and a vision tailored to the individual needs of their school. On the same token, teachers must teach with fidelity, relevance and rigor. Our support personnel must provide the stability and infrastructure necessary for all things in our schools to function well. In essence, a team approach is integral to our success. Over the years the Pleasants County School system has been recognized for excellence and the successes have been far reaching. However, we cannot rest on our laurels or we will fall behind.

G. Michael Wells
Superintendent of Schools

Employee Handbook Purpose

This Employee Handbook has been prepared to outline personnel policies and other procedures. Maintaining this electronic handbook is an on-going process requiring frequent updates. Employees will be notified by email whenever revisions are made to the handbook by the Director of Personnel.

This Employee Handbook is not intended as a detailed statement of all applicable personnel statutes, regulations and policies. Employees may request further information from their supervisor or the Director of Personnel when questions arise and more specific information is desired. In the case of any inconsistency between the content of this handbook and applicable statutes, regulations or policies, the latter shall prevail.

References throughout this handbook to the “District” should be interpreted at all times as the Pleasants County School District and references to the “Board” should be interpreted at all times as the Pleasants County Board of Education.

Mission Statement

All students will leave career and college ready to take their place and succeed in our global society.

Core Beliefs

- We believe our highest priority should be to provide an accessible, clean, safe environment in which students can maximize their learning potential.
- We believe our schools should embrace a positive school culture and should promote academic growth and, professional and personal integrity.
- We believe the education of our students is a partnership among community, schools, parents, and students.
- We believe clear communication is vital to the success of the system.

Explanation of District Priorities – Improving Outcomes for Students

College & Career Readiness Standards

The WV College & Career Readiness Standards describe the destination that schools and students are expected to reach, but by themselves have little power to affect change. These standards have been written to be broad statements that define the knowledge, skills and understanding all students must demonstrate in a content area at the end of the kindergarten through college career readiness sequence of study. Teachers must understand standards are not meant to be mastered in one learning opportunity, that students require common, clear learning targets and the rigor of the curriculum is identified in the skills students are learning not the standards. Educators must become proficient in their ability to identify embedded learning targets in the standard so that nothing essential is missed during instruction. They must be able to articulate what students should know, understand and be able to do in order to demonstrate mastery of the standard. Accordingly, teachers must be able to sequence the targets into developmentally appropriate learning progressions. By deconstructing or clarifying learning targets, we take a broad standard and break it into smaller more explicit learning targets.

Assessment for Learning

The purpose of classroom assessment is to support student learning and to use data to inform instructional pacing, design and differentiation. In order to support student learning, classroom assessment needs to involve students deeply in the assessment process, provide specific, descriptive feedback during the learning, and include evaluative feedback as required to communicate and report progress over time. Highly effective teachers recognize when students are deeply involved in the classroom assessment process and become more aware of their strengths and areas needing improvement. Only then are they likely to take action to close the gap between where they are in their learning and where they need to be. Teachers and administrators must embrace the purpose of assessment as a tool to inform instruction on a daily basis.

Instructional Practices Inventory

The primary purpose of the Instructional Practice Inventory (IPI) is to develop a school-wide picture of student learning practices that could serve as the basis for faculty reflection and instructional improvement. This school-wide picture is really a snapshot of instruction across an entire school for a specified period of time, usually a day. The process is designed to provide an “optimum” snapshot, with every effort made to present the best picture of learning on a typical school day. Each school in Pleasants County has trained administrators and professional educators. Teams across the district will be expected to complete four IPIs per school year and to utilize the data gathered to improve instructional practices central to student engagement and increasing rigor.

Instructional Skills and Strategies for High Quality Instruction (APL)

The practice of teaching is multi-faceted and requires an educator to understand pedagogy, assessment for learning and core content. However, the great divide between a struggling teacher and a mentor teacher often lies with classroom management. Educators in our school district are expected to become practitioners of the APL strategies outlined in the district implementation pacing guide. Central to those strategies include but are not limited to classroom conditions, serial positioning, bell ringers, anticipatory set, wait time, think/pair-share, checking for understanding, note taking, etc. Instructional leaders (principals) are expected to model, mentor and monitor implementation to ensure fidelity.

Instructional Support and Enhancements in Mathematics and Reading

Pleasants County Schools has maintained an ongoing effort to provide students and teachers with effective research-based instructional tools and resources to augment learning. Most recently, additional digital learning tools have been implemented to support literacy at the elementary and middle school levels including but not limited to Headsprout Reading A-Z Learning, Lexia Core5 Reading, Reading Plus and Accelerated Reader. Each digital tool provides a degree of differentiation, remediation and acceleration. Students rate of learning in reading are assessed through benchmark assessments facilitated by STAR Early Literacy and STAR Reading at the beginning, middle and end of the school year. At the elementary level students’ rates of learning are also progressed monitored through 95% Group’s PASI and PSI, as well as other screeners. This school year, our preschool students will be exposed to Read It Again curricular supplement designed to develop and strengthen young children’s early foundations in language and literacy. This supplement provides a systemic, explicit and flexible approach to building students’ skills in four key areas of language and literacy; vocabulary, narrative, phonological awareness and print knowledge.

Likewise, our district has sought out proven instructional supports to improve academic progress in mathematics. At the elementary and middle school level students’ rate of learning is measured through STAR Math and Study Island. Students have the opportunity for personalized learning through IXL and Study Island at every programmatic level. Both elementary schools will be implementing Excel Math in grades K-4 using a systematic spiraling approach to building higher order thinking skills and proficiency, which encourages self-correction and provides much needed repetition. At the middle and high school levels, students and teachers will continue to have access to Carnegie Learning Mathematics instructional resources. As professional educators we recognize that students develop, learn, and master secondary mathematics at different paces, and educators often need to identify supplemental materials that complement their core instruction with the aim to keep students from falling behind. As such, Carnegie Learning Adaptive Math Software Solutions, Mathia and Cognitive Tutor continue to be made available. However, teachers have been given latitude to augment their instruction with other proven instructional resources. The 2016-17 school year also marks a shift in secondary mathematics back to the “new” traditional content standards and scope and sequence. Accordingly, Carnegie Learning instructional materials have transitioned to support Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II courses.

Across programmatic levels, concerted efforts will be made to provide professional learning sessions through Math Solutions. Each programmatic level will be afforded three full-day sessions with the hopes of adding embedded professional learning to include modelling and lesson development, as funds are available. In addition, Number Talks training will be provided to K-5 math teachers with a focus on building number sense skills.

Grade Level Academies and Teacher Looping Model

During the 2016-2017 school year St. Marys High School will implement 9th and 10th grade level academies constructed within a teacher-looping model. The high school administration and leadership team will examine best practices specific to implementation. The practice of looping offers the potential for both academic and social benefits for students. Academically, the literature reports improved student achievement, increased time-on-task, increased instructional time for at-risk students to learn basic skills without the need for retention, and more opportunities for relationship building between teachers and students, and teachers and parents. The potential social benefits for students include diminished apprehension about a new school year, more time to establish positive peer relationships, increased support for students who require school as a social safety net, an enhanced sense of school and group as a "community", and increased opportunities for shy students to develop self-confidence. The essence of looping is the promotion of strong, extended, meaningful, positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students that foster increased student motivation and, in turn, stimulate improved learning outcomes for students. Looping teachers allows for a greater knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses, allowing for increased opportunities for teachers to tailor curriculum to individual needs. St. Marys High School administration and school leadership team, in collaboration with district leadership, must be vigilant in their implementation efforts.

Improving Student Attendance

Pleasants County Schools maintains a belief that we must teach the whole child. Our schools are responsible for teaching the state curriculum but hold a responsibility to promote leadership, citizenship and characteristics necessary to be a productive adult. Overall, our yearly attendance rate is commensurate with schools across our state and the nation. However, as our students pass through programmatic levels, there is a significant increase in the percentage of students who are chronically absent at the secondary level, which clearly impedes student learning. Each school day, students are missing from their classrooms—many without a bona fide excuse. Consequently, it is critical to identify strategies that intervene effectively with youth who are chronically truant. As such, Pleasants County Schools continues to focus our efforts and resources on strengthening partnerships with law enforcement, probation, court system, social service agencies, as well as, parents and families to tackle this systemic problem.

Explanation of District Priorities – Improving District Operations & Accountability

Distributive Leadership as a Driving Force

Pleasants County Schools has adopted the core belief that “Leadership Matters”. In recent years, there have been changes in district and school level leadership. Regardless of the changes in personnel, our school system must never falter and transition must be seamless. Subsequently, our district has embraced a commitment to implore a distributive leadership model operationalized by high quality standards. Schools have identified a leadership team and established common practices for operation and a strategic focus. Through collaborative conversations with school leadership teams, district level leadership has improved communication, increased accountability and has provided a stronger understanding of the supports and resources needed for their growth. In the coming school year, efforts will be made to strengthen our leadership team model.

Educator Evaluation System for Teachers, Counselors and Principals

The West Virginia Department of Education and the West Virginia Legislature have adopted an educator evaluation system with a vision of school leadership and effective teaching. This system includes all stakeholders and requires goal setting and data-driven outcomes. This system is expected to create a culture of increased support, accountability and transparency. The work of educating students is viewed as a shared responsibility between the educator and instructional leader. District and school-level leadership must maintain a continued emphasis on providing the necessary supports and resources for professional learning to ensure continuous growth.

Communication through Collaborative Conversations

The district leadership team will facilitate three Collaborative Conversations with each school leadership team. The focus of conversation will include school data, strategic plan goals and action step progress and efforts to improve outcomes for students. More specifically, school leadership teams will be asked probing questions requiring them to communicate understanding of their performance data, efforts central to continuous improvement and the role of their

leadership team to effect positive change.

Measuring Performance Data & Monitoring Leading and Lagging Indicators

Principals and school leadership teams will conduct a comprehensive data analysis each nine weeks on targeted leading and lagging indicators. The Director of C&I will provide a tool that teams will use to report their data and conduct a self-reflection. With an emphasis on data-driven decision-making, strategic plan goals and action steps must target identified deficiencies and root causes. School personnel have been trained on and encouraged to use the Clarity Warning System as a means to identify systemic weaknesses and at-risk students.

Monitoring Focus on Strategic Goals & Implementation of Identified Action Steps

The district leadership team will work collaboratively with schools in updating their Strategic Plan and each school will be provided a follow-up feedback report prior to the “official” school submission. In addition, principals and school leadership teams will complete and submit a quarterly Strategic Plan Progress Report detailing the status of each action step and a narrative delineating implementation efforts. The Director of C&I will provide a tool that teams will use to report their progress and follow-up constructive feedback. The school level and district strategic plan is viewed as a fluid document with no beginning or end date.

Strategic Plan Goals

Goal I: Improve student academic success in all courses of study through high-quality instruction and personalized learning as measured by school and state accountability data.

Goal II: Provide engaging classroom environments through a focused, integrated curriculum challenging all students to reach their potential as measured by school outcome data.

Goal III: Build leadership capacity throughout the district to promote and sustain continuous improvement for all as measured by school and state accountability data and performance inventories.

Orientation

All newly hired employees will be provided a formal orientation designed to ease their entry into the organization and provide them with basic information they need to succeed in their jobs. All new employees will be provided guidance on the following items:

- Insurance and Payroll Matters
- Salary and Tax Withholding
- Payroll Deduction Options and Benefit Plans
- Retirement Benefits
- Drug Free Workplace
- H.B. 2535 Jamie's Law (Suicide Prevention) / Jason Flatt Act
- District's Employee Handbook
- Persons Mandated to Report Suspected Abuse and Neglect
- Professional Staff Development Plan 2014-2015
- Service Personnel Staff Development Plan 2014-2015
- E-School Solutions Calling System
- Policy 3004 Expense Reimbursements
- Policy 3005 Use of Credit and Purchasing Cards
- Policy 3006 Employee Pay and Payroll Deductions
- Policy 3007 Fair Labor Standards Act - Overtime
- Policy 6000 Code of Conduct
- Policy 6001 Service Personnel Evaluations
- Policy 6002 Personnel Records

Policy 6003 Summer Employment
Policy 6004 Early Notification of Retirement
Policy 6005 Vacation
Policy 6006 Personal Leave
Policy 6007 Leave Bank
Policy 6008 Leave Donation Program
Policy 6009 Staff Development
Policy 6010 Travel and Educational Meetings
Policy 6011 Substitutes
Policy 6012 Student Teachers
Policy 6013 Volunteers
Policy 6014 Visitors Revised
Policy 6015 National Board Certification
Policy 6016 Reduction in Force of Administrative Positions (Laterality)
Policy 6017 Safety Policy
Policy 6018 Substitutes in Areas of Critical Need and Shortage

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the policy of the Board to afford equal opportunity for employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin and disability, which can be reasonably accommodated, gender, age, veteran status or political affiliation. This policy of nondiscrimination prevails throughout every aspect of the employment relationship including recruitment, selection, placement, training, promotions, transfers, pay, benefits, discipline and other terms and conditions of employment.

Accommodating Employees with Disabilities

Our District will make a reasonable accommodation(s) to the known physical or mental impairment(s) of a qualified individual with a disability, when necessary, to enable the qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job. An individual with a disability has the responsibility to request an accommodation. Information concerning reasonable accommodations for disabilities may be obtained at <http://www.ada.gov/>.

Harassment

Employees shall conduct themselves in a professional and collegial manner. Our District strictly prohibits racial, sexual or religious/ethnic harassment of any kind or violence toward students and staff as outlined in district policy. Our District will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment nor any act done with intent to cause fear of bodily harm in another. If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination or harassment on the job, you have the right to file a complaint with our District Title IX Director.

Communications

To ensure high employee morale and productivity, our District is committed to establishing and maintaining communication with and among employees at all levels of the organization. The following vehicles are used to accomplish this objective, including but not limited to: holding frequent staff meetings; maintaining an up-to-date website, issuing written communication and providing an open-door policy permitting employees to speak openly with supervisors. In addition, all supervisors are responsible for informing employees about matters affecting their job responsibilities or work assignments, the organization's goals and objectives, policies, concerns and matters of mutual interest.

Exempt or Nonexempt Employees

Employees whose jobs are governed by the Fair Labor Standards Act are either "exempt" or "nonexempt." Service employees are considered nonexempt employees are entitled to overtime pay. Professional Employees are exempt employees and not entitled to overtime pay.

Pay Periods and Paydays

Employees are paid twice a month, on the 10th and 25th. Employees are encouraged to utilize the Direct Deposit system to minimize delays. If a scheduled payday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, paychecks are issued on the Friday preceding the scheduled payday.

Payroll Deductions

An earnings statement is attached to each paycheck indicating gross wages, itemized deductions and net pay. It is the employee's responsibility to review earnings statements each payday. Any errors or unexplained discrepancies should be reported to the payroll office immediately.

Mandatory deductions from paychecks are Federal Withholding Tax, State Withholding Tax, Social Security Withholding Tax (FICA), Medicare and Teachers Retirement System Contribution. Other payroll deductions may be made based on authorization by the employee including, but not limited to Insurance Premiums (Basic Health, Optional Life, Dependent Life), Employee Association Dues; etc.

Holiday Observations

Employees are granted paid time off in observance of the following official holidays.

- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Primary Election Day
- General Election Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- New Years Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- Memorial Day
- West Virginia Day *(200 + Days Contracts)*
- Independence Day *(200 + Days Contracts)*

When a holiday occurs on Sunday, the Monday immediately following will be observed as the holiday. When a holiday occurs on Saturday, the Friday immediately preceding will be observed as the holiday.

Leave Donation Program

Our District has established a leave donation program under which annual leave accrued by an employee may, if voluntarily agreed to by the employee, be transferred to the annual leave account of another designated employee if the other employee requires additional leave because of a medical emergency or prolonged illness.

Leave Expectations

Personal Leave

At the beginning of his/her employment term a *regular full-time employee of the Pleasants County Board of Education

shall be entitled, annually, to two days personal leave for each employment month in the employee's employment term. This leave will accumulate indefinitely and shall be transferable within the State of West Virginia.

- Where the cause of personal leave had its origin prior to the beginning of the employment term the employee shall be paid for the time lost AFTER the start of the employment term.
- An employee shall qualify to use any or all personal leave accumulated if he/she is absent from duties due to personal sickness or personal injury accident. If the employee is absent for 5 consecutive days or longer, a doctor's excuse shall be required.
- Personal leave (with per days restriction) may also be granted to employees for exposure to a contagious disease and determination by his/her supervisor that the presence on duty of the employee may jeopardize the health of others (not to exceed days accumulated).
- An employee shall qualify to utilize personal leave for absence caused by death in the immediate family. The immediate family is defined as: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, grandson, granddaughter, foster parents and foster children or any relative with whom the employee may be living. [Note: also included are stepchildren or parents.]
- Leave of Absence for Personal Illness – An employee may use accrued personal leave for an extended illness or health condition, provided the necessity for leave is supported by medical documentation. The employee shall present a doctor's statement indicating that continued active employment would be detrimental to his/her health.
- Leave shall not extend past the end of the current school term, however, it may be renewed at the discretion of the board.

Restrictions

- The number of personal leave days allowed due to death in the immediate family is restricted in each event by the Board of Education as follows (unless otherwise stipulated in this policy)
 - Spouse, Son, Daughter, Parents 10 days
 - Brother, Sister 5 days 3.1.3
 - All Other 2 days
- An employee shall qualify to use a maximum of three days (for each occurrence) for absences caused by illness in the immediate family. If the illness is life threatening and involves the employee's spouse, parents or child, (immediate family), the employee shall qualify to use any or all personal leave accumulated, but for any absence exceeding three days, a physician's note of verification will be required.
- Additional days may be granted by the superintendent depending upon extenuating circumstances. Requests should be made in writing to the superintendent as soon as possible following the event. At any time the employee believes that extenuating circumstances exist for any absence reason, the individual should contact the superintendent for an interpretation. As in all matters, decisions made by the superintendent may be appealed to the Board of Education.

Leave Without Cause

An employee shall be permitted three days of personal leave (not to exceed the total amount of leave to which he/she is entitled), which may be taken without regard to the cause for the absence, (which may include professional advancement), except that personal leave without cause may not be taken on consecutive work days unless authorized or approved by the employee's principal or immediate supervisor, as the case may be: Provided, however, that notice of such leave shall be given to the employee's principal or supervisor, as the case may be, at least 24 hours in advance, except that in the case of sudden and unexpected circumstances, such notice shall be given as soon as reasonably practical; however, the use of such day may be denied if, at the time notice is given, either fifteen percent of the employees or three employees, whichever is greater, under the supervision of the principal or immediate supervisor indicate their intention to use that day for such leave: provided further, that such leave shall not be used in connection with a concerted work stoppage or strike.

All requests for leave without cause shall be submitted on the appropriate form as required by the central office.

- If an employee should use personal leave which he/she has not yet accumulated on a monthly basis and subsequently leave his/her employment, he/she shall be required to reimburse the board for the salary or wages paid to him/her for such un-accumulated leave.
- A maximum of two unused personal leave days may be carried forward into the next fiscal year for use as leave without cause. In no event shall an employee be able to exceed five cumulative days for this purpose.

Unpaid Leave of Absence

- Any employee may, upon approval of the Board of Education, be granted up to one year of unpaid leave as a result of pregnancy, childbirth, or adoptive or infant bonding. Upon submission of supporting documentation, the employee shall be granted such leave, and shall not be required to exhaust accumulated personal leave or vacation benefits prior to taking such unpaid leave.
- The Board of Education, upon recommendation of the superintendent, may grant leaves of absence to an employee for the following purposes other than for personal illness, maternity/adoptive leave or temporary disability, which are covered elsewhere in this policy:
 - School attendance – An employee may be granted up to two years leave of absence to pursue college training toward degree completion, for the improvement of his/her teaching certificate; or for graduate study relevant to his /her teaching career or for improvement of employment possibilities within the school system. In order to apply for such a leave, individuals must submit to the superintendent evidence of acceptance into the program and other documentation to support full time enrollment in an approved program. Leave may be granted pending completion of semester's work and upon submission of evidence documenting completion.
 - Other – The employee may also be granted leaves of absence for other good and just causes, e.g. officeholder in employee organization or public office, to do applied research, or accept temporary employment with RESA or the State Department of Education. Said leaves of absence shall not extend past the end of the current school year, but may be renewed at the discretion of the board.

Any employee on a leave of absence retains his/her accumulated personal leave, but while on the leave of absence does not add any additional days for personal leave, nor may be paid for illness beginning and ending during that leave of absence.

Illness Due to Pregnancy

Illness due to pregnancy may be charged to personal leave under the same conditions applying to any illness. (This is separate and distinct from the one year of unpaid leave to which an employee may be entitled pursuant to the provisions of Section 5.0, above.)

Military Service

All employees who are members of the national guard or any military reserve unit of the United States Armed Services, shall be entitled to leave of absence from their respective offices or employments without loss of pay, on the days during which they shall be engaged in drills, parades or other duty, during business hours ordered by proper authority, or for field training or active service of the state for a maximum period of thirty days in any one calendar year. The term "without loss of pay" means that the officer or employee shall continue to receive his normal salary or compensation notwithstanding the fact that such officer or employee may have received other compensation from federal or state sources during the same period. Benefits of this section shall not accrue to individuals ordered or called to active duty by the President.

Professional Leave

The superintendent may provide release time for any professional serving as a mentor, serving on the staff development council, or curriculum teams, or professional support teams. In attending to these matters personnel shall be deemed to be performing job related functions, and shall attend these meetings without loss of pay or work time. Individuals who serve as coaches in addition to other responsibilities have a duty to prevent absences from the classroom as much as possible and to consult with his/her immediate supervisor regarding the need to be absent;

however, it is understood that the performance of these duties may require absences from the primary responsibility.

- Individuals who have engaged in the process of becoming a National Board Certified Teacher, shall be afforded up to two (2) full days to assist them in the final preparation of documents and materials prior to assessment. These days may be used in whole or in part and may be used only after the individual has exhausted their "other personal leave (not illness)" days for that school year.

Court Proceedings

Any employee who is subpoenaed to appear as a witness, but not as a defendant, in any criminal proceeding in any court of law may make such appearance without loss of pay or accumulated leave. The board shall pay to such employee the difference between the witness fee, exclusive of travel allowances payable for such an appearance by the court, and the amount of salary due the employee for the time he/she is absent from employment by reason of answering such subpoena.

Any employee who is required to serve on any jury during the period of his/her contract with the board unless excused therefore by judge of the court may make such appearance without loss of pay or accumulated leave. In the case of service on a jury the board shall pay the difference between that allowed for such jury service and the amount of salary due the person for such period of time.

Personal Leave Increments

Personal leave may not be taken for periods of less than one-half day at a time.

Other Absences

An employee who is absent for any reason other than those stated above will be absent without pay and must obtain proper approval, as discussed herein. Also, any employee who fails to fulfill his/her contract with the board, or who is in violation of the provisions of this policy, may be subject to disciplinary action for willful neglect of duty, pursuant to 18A-2-2.

Any employee who has exhausted all accrued leave and must be absent without pay is required to notify the superintendent of the need for such absence. The superintendent may temporarily approve an unpaid absence, subject to approval at the next regular meeting of the Board of Education, if deemed justified by proper documentation and reason. If the Board of Education does not approve the absence, the employee will be required to return to work immediately or face disciplinary action.

Forms

Forms for applying for personal leave shall be furnished by the Board of Education. These forms shall be completed by the employee and returned to his/her principal the day said employee returns to work unless otherwise stipulated in this policy.

Family and Medical Leave

The board shall provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to "eligible" employees for certain family and medical reasons. Employees are eligible if they have worked for the Board of Education at least one year, and have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months. Leave shall be granted for any of the following reasons:

- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or a parent, (immediate family), who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that renders the employee unable to perform the employee's job.
- Because of a "qualifying exigency" arising out of the fact that an employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of contingency operation.

Advance Notice and Medical Certification

The employee shall be required to provide advance leave notice and medical certification. Taking a leave may be denied if requirements are not met.

- The employee shall provide 30 days advance notice when the leave is "foreseeable"
- The employee shall provide medical certification to support a request for leave because of a serious health condition, and the board may require second or third opinions (at the employer's expense) and a fitness for duty report to return to work.
- Job Benefits and Protection
- For the duration of FMLA leave, the board shall maintain the employer's portion of the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan".
- Upon return from FMLA leave, the employee shall be restored to his/her original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits and other employment terms.
- The use of FMLA shall not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

A "serious health condition" is an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either (1) prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or (2) prevents family members from participating in school or other daily activities. Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days, combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may also meet the definition of continuing treatment.

A "qualifying exigency" arises out of the fact that an employee's spouse, parent, or child is on active duty, or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation as a member of the National Guard or Reserves. A "qualifying exigency" may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, attending post-deployment reintegration briefings, and other activities associated with the family member's call or order to service. An employee whose spouse, parent, or child is a member of the Regular Armed Forces is not eligible for FMLA leave based upon a "qualifying exigency."

"Injured Service Member" Military Family Leave

In addition to the basic types of FMLA leave discussed above, an eligible employee who is the parent, child, spouse or next of kin (nearest blood relative other than the service member's parent, spouse or child) of a "covered service member" is entitled to take up to 26 weeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for the service member with a serious injury or illness. Leave to care for a covered service member shall only be available during a single 12-month period and, when combined with other FMLA-qualifying leave, may not exceed 26 weeks during the single 12-month period. The single 12-month period begins on the first day an eligible employee takes leave to care for the covered service member.

"Injured Service Member" Military Family Leave Spouses. If both an employee and his/her spouse work for Pleasants County Schools, the employee and spouse may be limited to a combined 12 weeks (or a combined 26 weeks to care for an injured or ill service member).

Unemployment Compensation

Employees of the state are covered by the West Virginia Unemployment Compensation Law, which is designed to provide insurance against loss of wages to employees who become unemployed. Additional information may be obtained from the Work-Force West Virginia at

http://www.wvcommerce.org/business/workforcewv/unemployment_compensation/default.a.spx.

Workers' Compensation

If an employee sustains a job-related illness or injury, the employee may be eligible to receive benefits under the Workers' Compensation Fund. The Workers' Compensation Fund provides compensation for loss of wages due to both temporary and permanent disabilities as well as payments for approved medical expenses.

Employees are expected to notify their supervisors and the West Virginia Department of Education Office of Human Resources immediately of any injury sustained while on duty. The Employee Manual on Workers' Compensation and Employee's and Physician's Report of Occupational Injury can be found at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/hr/currentEmployees.php>. When an employee is absent from work due to a compensable work-related injury or illness, the employee may elect to receive Temporary Total Disability Benefits (TTD) or take paid sick leave during the period of absence from work but may not receive both simultaneously. W.Va. Code §23-4-1 provides that employees of the state are ineligible to receive workers' compensation benefits while drawing sick leave benefits at the same time for the same reason. Therefore, the employee must make his/her choice known by completing an Election of Option Form <http://wvde.state.wv.us/hr/currentEmployees.php> and returning the form to the WVDE Office of Human Resources. Employees receiving paid sick leave and/or annual leave until initial TTD benefits check must reimburse the net value of the paid leave to the Department who will then restore that leave. Additional information on Workers' Compensation may be obtained at the website of the West Virginia Offices of the Insurance Commissioner <http://www.wvinsurance.gov/WorkersCompensation.aspx> or from the WVDE Office of Human Resources.

Staff Development

The Pleasants County Board of Education, through administration, shall schedule annually at least eighteen (18) hours of staff development for service and professional personnel. At least twelve (12) of the eighteen (18) hours must be scheduled prior to January 1st. All eighteen (18) hours must be completed prior to the start of the next school year.

Failure to complete timely the mandatory eighteen (18) clock hours of staff development may be considered willful neglect of duty and may subject the employee to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Personnel File

Necessary job-related and personal information about each employee is retained in the official personnel file kept by the Director of Personnel. Contents include basic employee identification, completed employment applications and other hiring related documents, position announcements, certification and training records, notices of salary adjustments and benefit coverage information, performance evaluations, disciplinary records and other relevant job-related information or documents deemed essential by the District. Personnel files of current and former employees are kept indefinitely.

Employees have the right to inspect information contained in their personnel files. Individuals will be given access to their files only in the presence of an authorized official and at a mutually convenient time and place. Personnel files may not be removed from the Personnel Office. At the request of the employee, the Office of Personnel will provide copies of documents on file. The personnel file is accessible to a supervisor for administrative or employment purposes. Individuals who review personnel files shall date and sign the inside left cover of the file.

If there are questions regarding information contained in an employee's personnel file, the employee should bring the matter to the attention of the Director of Personnel. The Director of Personnel will consider the employee's objection and correct or remove erroneous or improper information. If the Director of Personnel decides to retain the disputed information in the file, the employee is entitled to attach a written objection to that item, making the objection a part of the permanent file.

No information in a personnel file will be disclosed to anyone outside the District without written consent from the employee or former employee specifically authorizing the release of the information unless required to do so by law. The District reserves the right, however, to verify basic information, such as employment status and job title, without notification to the individual involved, and to cooperate with law enforcement, public safety or medical officials who have a valid need to ascertain limited, specific information about an individual. The Director of Personnel will also provide employment references, upon request, pursuant to W. Va. Code § 55-7-18a.

Performance Evaluations

Employees receive an annual written job performance evaluation by their supervisors in accordance with West Virginia State Board of Education Policy 5310 and District 6001.

Health and Safety

Employees are expected to follow safety instructions and to comply with procedures established to prevent accidents. An employee is responsible for immediately reporting health and safety concerns to his or her immediate supervisor.

Appearance

District employees serve as role models for the education profession. Employees are expected to use good judgment in determining appropriate attire. Clothing should be professional and reflect a high standard of personal hygiene. Clothing that alludes to obscenity, violence, sex or advertises alcohol, tobacco or an illegal substance is prohibited.

Attendance and Punctuality

The District expects regular attendance from all employees. Supervisors shall ensure that the work of the school, office or department is able to continue when considering all leave requests. Employees are required to be on time and ready to work at the beginning of their scheduled workday.

Confidentiality

Employees may be exposed to information that must remain confidential and are prohibited from disclosing confidential information as delineated in WV State Board of Education Policy 4350 and District Policy 8000 are. Violation of confidentiality may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Action

Employees have the obligation to keep themselves informed of all policies, rules and regulations by which they are governed. Employees are expected to meet standards of conduct and performance expectations and to adhere to applicable state and federal laws and regulations, as well as applicable State Board of Education policies. Failure to meet such standards, adhere to rules, regulations, policies and directives may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination at the discretion of the Superintendent upon recommendation to the Board. An employee may be suspended without pay or may be dismissed from employment. Examples of reasons for suspension or dismissal include, but are not limited to, misuse of state funds or property, insubordination, incompetence, unsatisfactory performance, intemperance, willful neglect of duty, job abandonment, immorality, cruelty, violation of the policy relating to alcohol and drugs in the workplace, fraud, the conviction or guilty plea or a plea of nolo contendere (do not wish to contend) to a felony charge, violation of the race, gender, religion/ethnic or violence policy.

Grievance Procedures

State employees are covered by the West Virginia Public Employees Grievance Procedure (W.Va. Code '6C-2-1, et seq. and §6C-3-1, et seq.). This law ensures that State Board employees have an equitable and consistent procedure for the resolution of grievances. The intent of the Grievance Procedure is to foster an environment in which grievances can be resolved at the lowest possible administrative level. The basic steps of the Grievance Procedure information, including copies of all required forms, can be obtained at the West Virginia Public Employees Grievance Board web site (<http://pegboard.state.wv.us/>).

Resignation

Employees who plan to resign are asked to give two weeks written notice prior to their last day of work. This written notice of the resignation must be submitted to the Superintendent.

Political Activities

The District is a nonpartisan entity and its employees are prohibited from using their official positions or resources to engage in political activities or support candidates for public office.

Solicitations

Direct or indirect political solicitation on state property or at any state work site is prohibited. Nonpolitical solicitation, sales and/or distribution of literature or merchandise by state employees are prohibited on state property or at any work site without the written permission of the Superintendent of Schools.