



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

2020-2021

Board of Education

The Caroline County Board of Education is comprised of five citizens of the county, three elected and two appointed by the Governor.

One of the chief duties of the Board is to set policies and approve procedures for the efficient and economical administration of the schools under its jurisdiction. These policies are administered by the Superintendent of Schools, who serves as the executive officer of the Board and his professional staff.

The Board meets regularly on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM, and in special session as the need arises. Board meetings are open, and anyone wishing to be on the Board Agenda for the purpose of having the Board make a decision on a matter which the Board is legally empowered to decide, may do so by contacting the Superintendent of Schools at least ten days prior to the scheduled meeting. Otherwise, any citizen may address the Board at any meeting by signing to do so prior to the beginning of the Board meeting.

Board Members

Mrs. Kathy S. Dill, President
Mr. C. Tolbert Rowe, Vice-President
Mr. George J. Abner, Member
Mrs. Louise M. Cheek, Member
Mr. James A. Newcomb, Jr., Member

Caroline County Public Schools Contact Information

Caroline County Public Schools
204 Franklin Street
Denton, Maryland 21629

410-479-1460
410-479-0108 (Fax)
www.carolineschools.org

Weekdays: 8:15 AM to 4:30 PM
Weekends & Holidays: By Appointment

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Board of Education of Caroline County does not discriminate in admissions, access, treatment or employment in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, marital status, age, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws. In addition, the Board adheres to Title VI, Title IX and Section 504 provisions relative to all educational programs.

Questions concerning non-discrimination policies and procedures should be made to the Supervisor of Human Resources.

I. Introduction

The policies, procedures, duties and benefits referred to in this handbook have been approved by the Board of Education and/or Superintendent of Schools. Unless the Superintendent of Schools directs otherwise, all changes noted in this document become effective on July 1. This Handbook is only a guide. It does not constitute any part of any employment contract, nor supersede any law, policy or procedure. Questions regarding this information can be directed to the Supervisor of Human Resources.

Unless stated otherwise in this handbook, the Caroline County Board of Education reserves the unilateral right to:

1. Determine services and standard of services to be rendered by the public schools.
2. Determine, with the advice of the Superintendent of Schools, the educational policies of the public schools.
3. Adopt, codify and make available to the public, rules and regulations for the conduct and management of the public schools.
4. Take any other action that is in the best interest of the public schools and is consistent with law.

II. Employee Responsibility

Identification (ID) Badges

All designated employees of the Caroline County Board of Education are expected to wear a prominently visible identification badge at all times. It is the employee's responsibility to procure an identification badge through the Human Resources office by making an appointment with the Personnel secretary. Replacement badges will be at the employee's expense.

All identification badges and clips/lanyards are the property of the Caroline County Board of Education. Employees are to return identification badges if they leave or terminate their employment. Failure to return an identification badge may result in the withholding of accrued salary and/or the employee's separation being considered "not in good standing".

Less than twelve-month employees must return their identification badge (along with the clip/lanyard) to their immediate supervisor at the conclusion of their work year. Badges will be reissued when the following work year commences.

Personal Dress and Appearance Expectations

The faculty and staff members of Caroline County Public Schools have a history of maintaining professional dress and appearance. Dressing appropriately for one's assignment makes a positive statement to students, parents and the general public. It is believed that dress and appearance can influence student behavior and affect general school climate. As a result, it is important that all school system personnel continue to recognize and meet reasonable expectations for appropriate dress and appearance.

Defining clear expectations for dress and appearance is at best difficult. While it is not the intention of the school system to dictate specific items of clothing, dress inappropriate to an individual's assignment must be avoided. Whenever an individual is in doubt as to whether a specific item of clothing, style, or appearance is within generally accepted standards, the individual should seek the principal's/supervisor's guidance.

Whenever the principal/immediate supervisor observes what is considered to be inappropriate dress or appearance, the principal/immediate supervisor shall counsel the individual as to what changes are necessary.

Below are suggestions that employees are encouraged to consider as they prepare for their work assignment. These suggestions are intended to serve as a basis for personal decision-making.

1. All personnel should wear clothing that sets them apart from the students they serve, and presents a positive image to the community.
2. Clothing should be neat, clean, and suited to the physical requirements of the job.
3. Clothing, jewelry and accessories should not distract students or other staff members from teaching and learning.
4. All personnel should avoid dress and apparel that is sexually suggestive, depicts violence, political in nature, revealing or obviously provocative.
5. All personnel should present themselves as adults who view themselves as professionals.

Personal Life

The personal life of an employee shall be the concern of and warrant the attention of the Board only as it may interfere with the effective performance of his/her assigned functions.

Clean and Orderly Workplace

Maintaining a clean and orderly workplace is a responsibility of each employee. All work areas require detailed care that extends beyond the regular services provided by custodial staff. Care of such items as cupboards, flowers and plants, desk appearance, etc., is the direct responsibility of the person(s) occupying the workspace.

When a difference of opinion occurs as to who has the responsibility for cleaning and maintaining an area, the principal/supervisor will decide, and all employees will be guided accordingly.

Safety

Each individual has a continuing obligation to perform his/her duties in a safe manner and to exercise reasonable judgment in the use of all equipment and materials. Any failure of an employee to perform his/her work in a safe manner shall be grounds for disciplinary action. All potential safety hazards are to be brought to the principal's and/or supervisor's attention at once. All accidents and injuries that are job-related are to be reported immediately to the appropriate principal/supervisor on appropriate accident forms. Accident investigations at the building level are to be conducted by the principal

or his/her designee. Accident forms are to be submitted to the Payroll Office by the principal/supervisor no later than forty-eight (48) hours after the accident occurs.

General safety guidelines include:

- Wear or use proper protective clothing and equipment required for the job
- Operate only authorized equipment and machinery
- Inspect all required tools and equipment required for the job
- Keep work areas clean and orderly
- Observe local, state and federal safety regulations

Hazardous Substances in the Workplace

The "Access to Information About Hazardous and Toxic Substance Act," The Employee Right to Know Law, gives employees a way to learn about chemical hazards in the workplace and how to work safely with these materials. (Article 89, Annotated Code of Maryland, §32A - 32N). A copy of this law is available at the Central Office. This law requires employers to inventory and list all hazardous and toxic substances used in the workplace and to collect Material Safety Data Sheets for these substances. Employers must know how to get information about the hazardous chemicals. Employees must know how to get information about the hazardous substances in their workplace and be trained in the safe use of these materials.

Our Right to Know Program

We have complied with the Right to Know Law by compiling a chemical information list and Material Safety Data sheets, checking that containers are labeled and by providing you with training.

*Chemical information list. Our chemical information list contains all of the chemicals we are using at this workplace. A copy of the list is available at your work location. Lists of chemicals used by other employers at this workplace are also available to you. Check with your immediate supervisor for those lists.

*Material Safety Data Sheets. All available material safety data sheets for chemicals used at this workplace are available at the following location: Support Services Center, 414 Gay Street, Denton, Maryland 21629. If you need to review a data sheet, please see the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, daily at 414 Gay Street, Denton, Maryland.

*Labels. The products that are used are labeled in accordance with the Right to Know Law. They contain an identification of any hazardous components and an appropriate hazard warning. Some of the products we use are consumer products and may not

indicate the hazards of their use. When in doubt, see the list and Material Safety Data Sheet.

*Training. We are providing you with training by this informational bulletin and on-the-job training about the specific hazards and ways to work safely with the hazardous chemicals you use.

Employee Rights -

You have the right by law to:

- See the Chemical Information List and Material Safety Data Sheets for hazardous substances in your workplace within one day of your request.
- Be provided with one copy of the list of substances you use and safety data sheets or the means to make a copy at no cost within five days of a request.
- Be trained on the hazards of the chemicals in your workplace, the appropriate equipment and methods to use to protect you from the hazards and emergency procedures.
- Refuse to work with a hazardous chemical if you are denied access to information about that chemical.

Employee Responsibilities -

Your Right to Know program takes teamwork. Do your part to work with your employer and co-workers to keep your workplace safe!

- Know where to get information about hazardous substances in your workplace
- Learn to read and understand labels and Material Safety Data Sheets
- Identify hazards before you start a job
- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Keep your work area clean
- Use protective clothing and equipment
- Don't smoke, eat or drink around hazardous substances
- Learn emergency procedures
- Follow your employers' procedures for disposal and cleanup
- Practice safe work habits at all times

Notice of Integrated Pest Management Program

The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program employed by the Caroline County Public School System is a proactive rather than a reactive approach to insect and rodent control on school property. The IPM program includes routine inspections or surveys of all school facilities to identify conditions conducive to pest invasion, to ensure early detection of pest presence, and to monitor infestation levels. As a first step in pest control, the IPM approach employs a number of preventative strategies and alternatives to pesticide application, such as: employee education, source reduction, inspection and identification

of potential problem areas, and improved sanitation. Each approach is monitored and evaluated, and modifications are made if necessary. Pesticides are used only as a last resort.

To be added to the notification list, send a written request to your work location that includes your name, address, and telephone number.

The following is a list of the pesticides and bait stations, by common name, that may be used in school buildings during the school year:

Methylethoxy	Hydropene	Orthoboric Acid	Bifrethrin
Boric Acid	Hydramethylnon	Bromadiolone	Deltamethrin
Disodium Octaborate	Tetrahydrate	Fipronil	

Copies of material safety data sheets (MSDS) and product labels for each pesticide and bait stations used on the school property are maintained by the contact person. Persons wishing to review this information should contact the Supervisor of Plant Operations at 11348 Greensboro Road, Denton, Maryland, 21629 (410-479-1210).

Notice: Availability of Asbestos Management Plan

In October 1986, the Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools. These regulations require most schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings and implement response actions in a timely manner.

These regulations assign schools many new responsibilities. Our program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in our asbestos management plan. This plan contains information on our inspections, re-inspections, response actions and post-response action activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress.

The management plans are available at each school and office site during normal business hours without cost or restriction.

If you have any questions about reviewing our management plan please contact the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services at 410-479-1210.

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).

Persons with disabilities, who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

Conduct

Employees are required to demonstrate cooperative, responsible behavior toward parents, the public, students, co-workers and supervisors. The Board of Education specifically prohibits theft, nepotism, conflicts of interest, collusion, bribery and all other unlawful acts. Employees shall not solicit or accept gratuities or anything of monetary value from contractors or other agents employed or contracted by the Board of Education.

Visitors During Working Hours

All visitors must report to the principal, school office, or main office before visiting the building. Except in cases of emergency, an employee shall not be contacted or visited during working hours by members of his/her family, friends or representatives of professional or commercial organizations. Exceptions shall be the Superintendent of Schools, his staff, or other persons specifically granted permission by the Superintendent of Schools or his designee.

Unauthorized riders are not permitted on school buses or in other support services vehicles.

Telephone Usage

Employees are not permitted to use school system telephones for personal calls, except in the case of an emergency. Any emergency long distance calls must be paid for by the employee.

Resolving Problems

Whenever, appropriate and possible, in attempting to resolve a problem, employees should utilize the 'chain-of-command' approach. Staff should first contact their immediate supervisor and work towards resolving the problem at that level. Problems that are not resolved at the immediate supervisor level can then be taken to the person who oversees the immediate supervisor. Further assistance can be obtained from the appropriate Director or Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services.

Lockers - Employees

Lockers assigned to employees for their use remain the property of the Board of Education and as such are subject to search upon reasonable suspicion of illegal or inappropriate conduct.

Attendance

Employees are expected to report regularly and on time to work. However, if an employee is going to be absent from work, the employee's immediate supervisor is to be notified prior to the absence. The nature of the absence must be explained to the immediate supervisor. If an absence for illness extends beyond three (3) consecutive workdays, medical certification must be presented to the employee's immediate supervisor on the day the employee returns to work stating that the employee was "physically unable to work".

For example, if an employee is absent for medical reasons for four (4) consecutive workdays, he/she must present on the day of return (the fifth day) medical certification that contains the following:

1. the dates of certified absence; and
2. recommended date of return; release date

All absences must be for acceptable reasons and the Board reserves the right to require documentation for any and all absences regardless of the number of days absent. Failure to abide by these attendance regulations may result in disciplinary action as well as loss of salary.

Absence

Absences for school level personnel shall be recorded each payroll period during the school year through the standard payroll reporting procedure. All personnel should carefully review the rules and procedures that apply to them regarding absences. These rules are found in applicable Board policies (IV.40.10), the Negotiated Agreement for teachers, the Memorandum of Understanding for Administrators and Supervisors, the Support Services Negotiated Agreement for support services employees and Administrative Procedure 10.

Central Office personnel must complete the Record of Absence form whenever they are absent from work. Employees who regularly use a machine-punched time card do not have to use this form.

The Board of Education reserves the right to request employees to submit satisfactory proof of illness.

Fitness for Duty

All school employees are expected to be fully capable of performing their duties upon their employment. Any employee may be required to submit medical proof that he/she is continually able to perform his/her assigned tasks without danger to himself/herself or others.

Training – Support Staff

The Caroline County Board of Education may require that an employee participate in predetermined job-related training programs, providing that such training occurs during the employee's scheduled workweek. On occasion, such training may occur beyond the workweek for employees of the Family Support/Judy Hoyer Centers.

Work Schedules – Support Staff

The principal or the appropriate supervisor will usually determine daily work schedules for support services personnel. When school is not in session, uniform work schedules may be required. Employees are expected to adhere to those work schedules and report regularly and on time.

Each employee will receive an annual Assignment Notification form that will indicate the number of actual work hours per day. The number of total assigned workdays will also be provided annually.

On occasion, employees of the Family Support/Judy Hoyer Centers may be requested to work on a non-scheduled work day, on a rotating basis, as determined by the immediate supervisor, in response to program needs.

Transporting Students In Personal Vehicles

1. COMAR 13A.06.07.11 states that only one (1) student is permitted to be transported in any vehicle other than an approved school bus.
2. School administrators are to avoid granting permission to employees to transport students in privately owned vehicles, unless no other reasonable alternative is available.
3. Employees are generally prohibited from providing school-related transportation (unless they volunteer to do so and receive clear, express permission from a school administrator). Employees who routinely transport students as part of their job responsibility may do so for the specific student(s) identified by the school administration.
4. Failure to obtain clear, express permission from a school administrator will result in the loss of liability insurance coverage through the Board's insurance program.
5. An employee who volunteers to provide school-related transportation must be properly licensed to drive and be legally insured in the State of Maryland.
6. Whenever possible, the form "Authorization to Transport Students", is to be completed in advance. This can be submitted in advance for an entire school year for those employees who regularly transport students as part of their scope of employment.

7. A copy of the employee's license and evidence of insurance must be submitted with the authorization form to the appropriate school administrator.
8. If verbal permission to transport a student is given on an emergency basis, the employee must submit the authorization form and required documentation within one (1) week after providing the transportation.
9. All original copies of the "Authorization to Transport Students" form, with the required documentation, are to be retained by the school administrator who authorized the transportation.

III. Employment and Salary Provisions

Salary Provisions – Certificated Staff

All professional personnel shall be assigned positions in the school system in accordance with the following provisions:

New or returning personnel shall be placed on the proper increment of the salary scale in keeping with acceptable years of experience and qualifications.

- a. Credit shall be given for all full-time satisfactory teaching experience performed under contract in any duly constituted school system.

Verification of this experience must be completed by former employer(s) on the appropriate form provided by the Personnel Office. All verification forms are subject to approval for experience credit to be awarded. If approved, completed verification form(s) received in the Personnel Office within thirty days of employment will be given retroactive experience credit. Completed forms received after thirty days will be processed as indicated in "c" below.

- b. New teachers shall be placed on the proper increment of the appropriate salary scale according to actual or anticipated certification status. If the teacher cannot be certified as anticipated, the contract is automatically voided. Changes in certification status during the year that require a higher annual salary shall be made retroactive to the date of issuance of new certificate, if applicable. No certificated teacher's salary shall be reduced during the current year regardless of his/her certification status unless he/she has agreed to such a possibility at the time of employment and this

condition is so stated on his/her contract. Such reduction would be effective at the time of notification and not retroactive.

c. Certificated personnel who meet the qualifications for advancement to the Master's or Master's Plus 30 pay scale will have their pay adjusted effective the first day of the pay period following the receipt of an official notice by the employee to the office of Human Resources.

Eligibility for Master's Plus 30 – Any combination of graduate, undergraduate or MSDE Continuing Professional Development Credits (CPD'S) awarded after the conferral of the Master's Degree. Graduate and undergraduate coursework must be taken at a regionally accredited institution and a final grade of "C" or better must be earned.

Example: If the Human Resources Office receives official notice of the completion of all requirements for the Master's Degree two days before pay day, the change in pay will be effective the first day of the new pay period and will be included in the following paycheck.

The same procedure will apply to the increment for an earned doctoral degree.

Official Notice Is Defined As:

Master's Plus 30 - official transcript with a written request from individual

Master's or Doctorate - official transcript

d. New professional personnel who are employed since the 1981-82 school year for less than a full year will be advanced a full increment on the salary scale only if the experience was for more than one-half (1/2) the total number of required teacher work days. If not, the person will remain on the same salary increment the following school year.

e. Teachers who were granted half-year experience credit prior to the 1981-82 school year receive half of the dollar value of the next increment on the appropriate salary scale. This procedure includes those teachers who approach the 20th, 25th, and 30th longevity increments. For example, when a teacher finishes 18.5 years of experience in June, he/she will receive the salary amount the next year for 19 years experience, plus half of the longevity increment for 20 years.

Salary Provisions – Support Staff

Appropriate salary schedules and workday calendars for support services personnel are distributed annually to all employees.

In addition, each employee will receive an Assignment Notification Form indicating where the employee will be assigned during the next year and on which increment of which salary scale the individual will be paid. However, while it is not intended that employees will be casually transferred from one assignment to another, no employee has any vested right in an assignment in a particular job or location, and new assignments may be made as needs of the school system may dictate.

Each employee must return the original Assignment Notification Form indicating whether or not he/she wishes to continue as an employee of the Board of Education. Failure to return the original within the time specified will serve as a resignation from the school system.

The following guidelines are used to place personnel on the appropriate scale and increment of the support services personnel salary schedule:

1. New employees will be given one (1) increment credit for every two (2) years of related, documented, full-time prior experience, unless related previous experience was in another school system. In this instance, new employees will receive one (1) increment credit for every year's experience.

Verification of previous experience must be completed by former employer(s) on company stationery/letterhead. All previous employment verifications are subject to approval by the Supervisor of Human Resources for experience credit to be awarded. If approved, completed previous employment verifications received in the Personnel Office within thirty (30) days of employment will be given retroactive experience credit. Completed previous employment verification received after thirty (30) days will result in the experience credit becoming effective the first day of the pay period following the receipt of the previous employment verification.

2. Current employees who are promoted to a higher position within the same job classification (custodian to head custodian, food service worker to manager, etc.) will receive credit on the salary schedule for each year of prior service in the lower classification.

3. Cafeteria Manager I personnel who have completed three (3) school years of satisfactory experience in that assignment with Caroline County Public Schools will be classified as a Cafeteria Manager II the following school year.

4. Cafeteria workers who are assigned as managers or assistant managers on a temporary basis will be paid on the appropriate higher scale at their same increment beginning the sixth (6th) consecutive day of the temporary assignment.
5. Food service employees who meet food service certification requirements at the beginning of a school year shall receive a stipend of \$400.00 added to his/her annual salary.
6. Progress toward certification by food service employees will be considered when decisions are made regarding additional work hours or promotions.
7. Custodians who are assigned as head custodians on a temporary basis will be paid on the appropriate higher scale at their same increment beginning the sixth (6th) consecutive day of the temporary assignment.
8. Head Custodian I personnel are responsible for four (4) or fewer subordinates.
9. Head Custodian II personnel are responsible for more than four (4) subordinates or work full time at a high school.
10. Custodial personnel who are assigned to work on a regular shift that begins at 1:00 p.m. or after shall receive an additional thirty cents (\$.30) per hour.
11. Plant Maintenance I personnel must have skills and experience in one (1) or more trade areas.
12. Plant Maintenance II personnel must have a Master's License, or its equivalent, in one (1) or more trade areas.
13. Any other employee who holds a temporary license or certificate shall have \$200.00 added to his/her annual salary, if they are assigned to perform these duties.
14. All bus drivers must be certified as drivers in accordance with State requirements.
15. Bus assistants who drive school buses on a temporary basis will be paid on the driver's scale at their same increment.
16. All health room assistants must be certified in accordance with State of Maryland regulations.
17. Instructional Assistants assigned to work on a regular basis for the full day in an intensive life skills support classroom shall be paid as an Assistant II.

18. All nurses must be licensed in accordance with State of Maryland regulations.
19. Secretaries assigned to schools can be Secretary I or Secretary II and are assigned by the principal.
20. Secretarial personnel who are assigned, on a temporary basis, to a position at a higher pay scale, will be paid on the appropriate pay scale at their same increment beginning the sixth (6th) consecutive day of temporary assignment.
21. Support services personnel who are selected for non-related positions outside their present classification will receive one (1) increment credit for every two (2) years of full-time employment within the Caroline County School System. An individual who applies for and is assigned to a higher salary scale will receive no less than his/her current hourly rate.

Substitutes for Instruction – Support Staff

Intended for individuals who work 6 or more hours per day.

In the event it is necessary and in the best interest of the school system to utilize the services of an instructional support services personnel (excluding parent service providers or interpreter) as a substitute teacher, the instructional support services personnel (ISSP) will receive a \$50.00 stipend for each full day served as a substitute teacher (\$25.00 stipend for a half day). This stipend will be processed through the regular payroll system established for substitute teachers. Special Education instructional assistants are not to be used to cover other non special education classes. In the event of an emergency (i.e. sudden teacher illness, unscheduled I.E.P. meeting,) the principal will have the authority to offer the substitute position to the instructional assistant whose assignment is such that placement in the emergency situation will cause the least disruption to the school and be in the best interest of the students.

Probationary Employees – Defined – Support Staff

A probationary employee is defined as follows:

1. An employee who is beginning his/her employment with the Board of Education.

Probationary status for all new employees is for ninety (90) calendar days. Probationary employees who are beginning their employment with the Board of Education do not receive payment for holidays. They do, however, earn sick leave and vacation leave, but may not use these benefits during their probationary period. Other leave benefits are

also not available for use during the ninety (90) day probationary period for new employees. Health and life insurance coverage is made available upon employment.

New probationary employees are to be evaluated by the appropriate administrator or supervisor at least once within the first sixty (60) days of employment and at the end of the ninety (90) day probationary period. A recommendation is made at the end of the probationary period as to whether or not to continue the employee's employment.

2. An employee who is beginning his/her employment in a supervisory position with the Board of Education. Such employee will be evaluated at least once by the end of the ninety (90) day probationary period.

3. An employee who has been evaluated and recommended for probationary status, as approved by the Superintendent of Schools or his designee, may be placed on probation for a period of time not to exceed ninety (90) days, but they still retain their right to a formal hearing if a recommendation for suspension (without pay), and/or discharge results.

Discipline – Support Staff

Discipline shall be defined as a penalty imposed upon an employee or entered into the employee's record outside the routine evaluation process.

Non-probationary employees will not be subjected to suspension and/or discharge without being informed of the reason(s). These employees will have the opportunity to schedule a hearing and bring witnesses to testify on his/her behalf. Non-probationary employees who have been subjected to suspension and/or discharge by the Superintendent or his designee shall have the right to file a 4-205 appeal to the Board under Section 4-205 (c) of the Annotated Code of Maryland if filed within thirty days after the suspension and/or discharge.

Evaluation

Certificated Staff: See Board Policy IV.40.30

Support Staff:

The purpose of the evaluation process is to rate employee performance by utilizing fair assessment procedures. Support services employees will be evaluated no less than annually and all evaluations will become part of the employee's personnel file. No such evaluation shall be placed in the employee's file, or otherwise acted upon, without prior

conference with the employee. Employees will receive a copy of all such evaluations. Any employee's explanation serving as a clarification concerning an evaluation must be noted, in writing, signed and dated for attachment.

Transfers/Vacancies

Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 9

Support Staff:

The Superintendent shall determine when a vacancy exists. In filling vacancies, consideration will be given first to current employees of the Board who have expressed this interest on the annual intent form and/or who respond to a vacancy posting. Support Services personnel will be transferred and assigned at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools when deemed in the best interest of the school system. Requests for voluntary transfers must be submitted no later than the last day of the employee's work year.

Employees who do not indicate they want consideration for a change in job status should not expect consideration when vacancies occur from one school year to the next. The Superintendent reserves the right to transfer and assign support services personnel based upon the needs of the school system.

Lay Off and Recall

Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 10

Support Staff:

The lay-off and recall procedures apply only to those support services personnel who satisfy the criteria outlined below. The last Support Services Personnel Evaluation Checklist issued by the immediate supervisor will be utilized to determine compliance.

- No unsatisfactory ratings indicated
- No more than two (2) needs improvement ratings indicated

A. LAYOFF: If it is necessary to lay-off support services personnel, employees will be laid off in the reverse order of their employment with the most recently hired employee in the affected "category" being laid off first.

For purposes of lay-off, support services personnel "categories" will be the same as those listed on the Support Services Personnel Salary Scale, except that special education instructional assistants and school bus assistants will also be treated as separate "categories".

B. **RECALL:** Support Services Personnel who are laid off will be offered the first available position in their "category." Employees on lay-off will be recalled in the reverse order of their lay-off, with the employee laid off last being offered the first available position. Refusal to accept an offered position or the employee's lack of response to written notification will be considered as a resignation and all recall rights will be terminated.

The Superintendent of Schools shall determine when a vacancy exists.

Lay-off is considered a separation from employment, therefore, continuous service begins with the new date of employment.

Benefits While on Layoff:

Sick leave benefits accrued prior to lay-off are reinstated if the employee is recalled. Personal leave benefits accrued prior to layoff are reinstated if the employee is recalled prior to the conclusion of the work year in which the layoff occurred. If the recall occurs after this time, personal leave benefits accrued at the time of layoff will be converted to sick leave. Accrued vacation leave is due and payable to the employee at the time of layoff.

Employees' retirement and pension rights are as outlined by the Maryland State Retirement/Pension Systems. This information is available from the Retirement Coordinator at the Central Office.

Employees on lay-off may continue their coverage for a limited period of time in the Board of Education's health insurance programs by paying the monthly premiums. The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) provides for this benefit. Employees on lay-off should contact the Personnel Office regarding insurance continuation provisions.

Lay-off is considered a separation from employment, therefore, no employee benefits are available except as stated above.

Separation From Employment (Resignation/Retirement)

Certificated Staff: See Employee Contract COMAR 13A.07.02.01B (Regular); COMAR 13A.07.02.01C (Provisional)

Support Staff:

Under certain conditions, it may be necessary for an employee to terminate his/her employment during the work year. In all such cases, the employee is to give the Superintendent of Schools a minimum of ten (10) workdays' notice of resignation/retirement. Resignations/retirements should be addressed to the Superintendent of Schools and are binding when submitted. Failure to abide by the ten (10) workday notification requirement may result in forfeiture of all accrued salary. Personal leave and sick leave are not paid upon termination of employment. Employees who terminate their employment without proper notice are ineligible for reemployment consideration for a period of five (5) years.

IV. Payroll Information

Payroll Periods

Most personnel are paid "to-date" with the first paycheck being issued on the first pay date after employment. Payroll adjustments are made each pay date for the prior payroll period.

Payroll checks are based upon one twentieth (1/20) or one twenty-fourth (1/24) of the annual salary for ten-month employees. Payroll checks for twelve-month employees are based upon one twenty-fourth (1/24) of the annual salary. Paychecks are issued on the 15th and the last business day of the month unless either falls on a weekend or holiday. In this case, the pay date will be the last business day prior to these dates.

Direct Deposit

All new employees will receive their salary through direct deposit. Direct deposit will be made available to any institution of the employee's choice that has been assigned an American Bankers Association (A.B.A.) routing number for the purpose of transferring funds.

If an employee wishes to change any information relative to their direct deposit, a new Direct Deposit application must be completed prior to implementing the change.

Those employees who were hired prior to mandatory direct deposit and have chosen not to participate shall have paychecks delivered on the regularly scheduled interoffice mail run. Should the pay date occur outside of this schedule, checks will be delivered on the next scheduled mail run day.

Failure to comply with the direct deposit requirement may result in disciplinary action and/or loss of employment.

Time Cards - Support Staff

Time cards, or a similar record of daily hours worked, will be maintained at the work site for each employee. These are to be reviewed and approved by the appropriate supervisor or principal at the end of every pay period. All time reports originating at the school level are to be approved by the principal before they are submitted to the Finance Office. If time clocks are used, personnel are required to "punch in" and "punch out" whenever they arrive at the building or leave for any reason other than school business. Each employee is required to punch his/her own time card. School business must be pre-approved by the building administrator or supervisor.

Individual time cards are to be signed by the employee on each side indicating accuracy of the time reported. School-level custodial time cards are to be reviewed by the head custodian and initialed at the bottom on each side indicating accuracy.

Overtime – Regular – Support Staff

Overtime is calculated at time and a half and is based on hours worked above forty (40) regular hours in a given workweek. Overtime for custodians must be authorized in advance by the principal and Supervisor of Plant Operations. Overtime for cafeteria and maintenance personnel must be authorized in advance by the appropriate supervisor. Overtime pay will be included in with the regular payroll check as an adjustment to regular salary.

Availability for overtime is a job requirement. If no one volunteers for overtime, overtime may be assigned on a rotated basis.

Personnel who regularly work less than forty (40) hours per week will receive pay at their regular rate of pay until they exceed forty (40) hours for the week when they are assigned to work at school-sponsored activities or functions. School-sponsored activities or functions are those organized, directed, and controlled by a school or school system administrator.

Overtime – Special – Support Staff

When non-school sponsored organizations need the use of cafeteria or custodial staff beyond their regular workday, the principal, the Coordinator of Food Services and/or the Supervisor of Plant Operations will make that determination. Once the determination has been made, those employees will be paid at the rate of time and a half their regular pay, regardless of the hours worked. Non-school sponsored organizations include the P.T.A. and other parent support organizations.

In all cases where service is rendered to non-school sponsored organizations, an employee will be paid a minimum of one (1) hour for special labor. No employee of the Caroline County Board of Education may be paid for special labor by any means other than the regular payroll process of the Board of Education. If any employee solicits or accepts any other compensation for special labor from any group, person, school or organization, he/she shall be immediately ineligible for any further special overtime. Such employees may be restored to special overtime eligible status only by the Superintendent of Schools.

Support services personnel shall not be involuntarily scheduled to cover non-school sponsored activities on Sundays or on the holidays listed in this handbook.

V. Leaves

Forty (40) Day Unpaid Leave

A special leave benefit is available to eligible employees who need to be absent due to illness (including maternity) for forty (40) workdays or less and do not have enough sick leave to cover the entire forty (40) workdays. The purpose of this benefit is to allow the employee who has less than forty (40) accumulated sick leave days to keep their job even though their sick leave runs out before the forty (40) days are up. The forty (40) workdays, during which an employee's job is held open, includes any consecutive sick leave days that the employee uses before the beginning of his/her leave of absence. For example, if an employee takes ten (10) consecutive days of sick leave and then requests and receives a thirty (30) day leave of absence without pay, then his/her job will be held open as long as the employee returns to work at the end of the approved leave, which is the 41st day.

Employees interested in more information regarding this special forty (40) day leave provision should contact the Personnel Coordinator.

Family and Medical Leave Act

Each eligible employee will be granted family and/or medical leave of absence without pay for up to twelve (12) weeks during any twelve (12) month period. An eligible employee is one who has been employed with the Board of Education for Caroline County for at least 12 months in total, and for at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12 months prior to the commencement of his or her leave. Leave will be granted for one or more of the following reasons:

1. For the birth of the employee's child in order to care for the child;
2. For the adoption of a child or the placement of a foster child with the employee;
3. To care for a sick spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
or
4. Due to the employee's own serious health condition that renders the employee incapable of performing the functions of his/her job.
5. For military family leave provisions which include twelve (12) weeks for qualifying exigency leave and up to twenty-six (26) weeks for military caregiver leave.

For more information on Family and Medical Leave, contact the Personnel Coordinator.

Military Service

Employees who are members of the military or naval establishments of the United States or of the State of Maryland shall be granted leave on those days during which they shall be engaged in any military or naval duty to which they shall be ordered by proper authority, not to exceed fifteen (15) calendar days in any year without loss of pay for the working days included in such leave.

Any employee who is ordered by proper authority to engage in such duty must submit a copy of their official signed orders to the Human Resources Office. These papers must be received prior to the start of the leave.

Jury Duty

Employees subpoenaed to serve as jurors must make arrangements with their immediate supervisor and the business office to be excused to serve as a member of a jury. Such an absence, if properly approved, will be granted without penalty to salary or other form of leave for which the employee may be eligible. Employees must provide a copy of the official notification to their immediate supervisor at least seven (7) working days prior to the court date. An employee being released from jury duty during working hours must

return to his/her work station for the remainder of his/her workday, if released in sufficient time to have two or more hours on the job before normal quitting time.

Court Subpoena

- A. Court Subpoena – An employee who is subpoenaed as a witness in a case (not related to their employment with the Board) may be granted unpaid leave for the period of time the employee is unable to report to work. Written notice of the leave, to include a copy of the subpoena, must be provided to the employee’s supervisor at least seven working days prior to the court date. An employee may use personal or vacation leave time, if available. The use of personal or vacation leave does not negate the need to provide the notice called for in the paragraph.
- B. Court Subpoena, on Behalf of the Board - An employee who is subpoenaed as a witness in a case on behalf of the Board shall be granted paid leave for the period of time that the employee is unable to report to work. The Board will grant paid leave to the employee when subpoenaed to court on behalf of the Board. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall determine if the case is Board-related.

Health Coverage While on Leave of Absence

Employees who are on an approved leave of absence without pay do not receive the health insurance allowance. Arrangements must be made to pay the full cost of premiums while on leave of absence. Employees should contact the Payroll/Benefits Coordinator at the Board of Education’s Central Office.

Those employees utilizing the Family and Medical Leave Act do receive the health insurance allowance. Health benefits will be continued for the duration of an employee’s family or medical leave.

Sick Leave - Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 16

Personal Leave – Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 18

Parental Leave – Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 18

Bereavement Leave – Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 18

Religious Leave – Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 18

Sabbatical Leave – Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 18

Unpaid Personal Leave – Certificated Staff:

All teachers are entitled to personal leave in accordance with the negotiated agreement. The purpose of such leave is to allow teachers time for personal business that cannot be conducted outside the scheduled work hours. Once these leave days have been used, additional unpaid leave will be granted only in the most unusual or emergency circumstances as determined by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

Teachers who wish to be absent without pay in excess of their personal leave benefits must request approval from the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. The request must be received in writing at least five (5) calendar days prior to the absence. The request must indicate the specific reason(s) for the absence.

Requests for such leave will not be approved when the absence is related to a vacation, hunting or shopping trip, or to attend a sporting event. Requests related to the individual's obligatory role and function as a spouse, child or parent will be considered (a wedding, hospital or nursing home admission or sudden family emergency).

Should a request for an unpaid personal leave be denied, the employee is expected to report to work. Failure to do so is considered willful neglect of duty.

Reinstatement – Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 18

Sick Leave – Support Staff

All support services personnel, excluding part time employees, are eligible for leave for personal illness at the rate of one (1) day per month, the annual total of which shall be available at the beginning of the fiscal year. Employees hired before July 1, 2013 will continue to receive their current level of benefits, provided they work no less than the same number of hours. Should this occur, they shall be governed by the new level of benefits.

Employees who use sick leave at a rate that exceeds what they earned on a monthly basis shall be required to reimburse the Board if their employment is separated. Employees hired during the fiscal year will receive a proration of one (1) day for each month remaining in the fiscal year. Employees must be employed a minimum of fifteen (15) days in their initial month of employment to receive one (1) day of leave for that month.

Sick leave is accumulated if not used and is applied as a service time credit upon retirement, on the basis of one month's creditable service time for each 22 days of sick leave. If the remaining sick leave totals eleven (11) days or more, then an additional month is granted. Therefore, accumulated sick leave provides additional retirement benefits in addition to providing protection against long-term illness. Sick leave is accrued by probationary employees but may not be used until the probationary period is ended.

Unused sick leave may be accumulated without limit.

Sick leave may also be utilized for other excused health related absences, such as medical, dental, optical examinations, when the scheduling of such medical appointments and/or medical treatment cannot be accomplished outside of normal work hours or is impracticable on non-duty days.

In addition, employees may use from accumulated sick leave up to their annual allowance of leave per year for illness of a member's children, spouse, parents, and parents-in-law, siblings or any relative regularly living in the household of the employee.

Personal Leave - Support Staff

Support services personnel who work ten (10) or twelve (12) months and at least 30 hours per week are eligible to be granted three of their workdays of (3) paid personal leave per year. Employees hired before July 1, 2013 will continue to receive their current level of benefits, provided they work no less than the same number of hours. Should this occur, they shall be governed by the new level of benefits.

Employees hired during the fiscal year will receive a proration of the appropriate leave benefit rounded to the nearest half-day for the remainder of the fiscal year. Employees must be employed a minimum of fifteen (15) days in their initial month of employment to receive the appropriate leave benefit for that month.

The approval of personal leave is governed by certain established stipulations. These include:

1. Personal leave shall not be granted the day before or the day after Thanksgiving, winter or spring holidays.
2. Personal leave will not ordinarily be approved during the first two (2) weeks and the last two (2) weeks of the student school year, with the exception that unavoidable personal leave may be approved by the appropriate principal or supervisor.

3. New employees shall receive the same personal leave benefits as other employees but may not use personal leave while serving their ninety (90) days probation.
4. All requests for personal leave are to be made in writing at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance to the principal and/or appropriate supervisor. Personal leave will not be granted retroactively, except as part of the inclement weather policy or as approved by the appropriate principal/supervisor as an emergency that could not have been planned for in advance. (The principal/supervisor shall make this judgment.)
5. Approval of personal leave will be at the sole discretion of the immediate supervisor.
6. Personal leave will be accumulated as sick leave if not used by June 30.

Vacation Leave – Support Staff

Support services personnel who work twelve (12) months and at least 30 hours per week are eligible for paid vacation leave in accordance with the CCESPA Agreement (Article 7.6). Employees hired before July 1, 2013 will continue to receive their current level of benefits, provided they work no less than the same number of hours. Should this occur, they shall be governed by the new level of benefits.

Vacation requests must be made to the immediate supervisor using the appropriate form (FORM 105/1-93).

All employees must submit their summer vacation requests before June 1st for approval by the appropriate principal or supervisor. New probationary employees may earn vacation leave, but may not take vacation until after the probationary period ends.

Support services personnel who receive vacation leave may carry over twenty (20) days of vacation leave from one year to the next. The date for carry over of leave is July 1 of each year. Vacation days in excess of the annual maximum (20 days) may be accrued up to a maximum of an additional 20 days during the course of employment and placed into an account that may be accessed only upon retirement. At the time of retirement, employees will be paid for up to 20 days of these additionally accrued, unused annual leave days at the daily rate at which he/she is paid at the time of retirement. No support services employee shall be compensated for more than forty-one (41) vacation days at the time of retirement.

Non-probationary employees who voluntarily terminate their employment and who provide the required ten (10) work days' notice, shall be paid for their unused accrued vacation leave. Non-probationary employees who DO NOT voluntarily terminate their

employment and/or who DO NOT provide the required ten (10) work days' notice, shall NOT be paid for their unused accrued vacation leave.

Holiday Schedule – Support Staff

Approved holidays for twelve-month support services personnel who work at least 30 hours per week are listed below. Employees hired before July 1, 2013 will continue to receive their current level of benefits, provided they work no less than the same number of hours. Should this occur, they shall be governed by the new level of benefits.

New probationary employees do not receive holiday pay. Holidays are pre-established in the Board approved school calendar.

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

New Year's Eve

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Day

Presidents' Day

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Memorial Day

Other Leave Benefits (Not applicable to probationary employees)

Extended Leave for Health Reasons – Support Staff

a. If sick leave benefits are to be used for absences that exceed three (3) consecutive workdays, then a written statement from a medical doctor must be submitted to the Human Resources, which indicates that the employee is physically (or mentally) unable to work.

b. If an employee uses accumulated sick leave and provides the required medical statement, the employee may use all of his/her sick leave, regardless of the number of workdays missed, and still return to the position they held prior to the absences.

c. If sick leave benefits run out and the illness continues, then the employee must either resign his/her position or request a leave of absence without pay. Requests for such leaves will be granted for up to two (2) years, if the employee continues to be physically (or mentally) unable to work. Prior to the expiration date of an approved leave, the employee must request an extension if they are medically unable to return to work. A new leave request and medical statement should be

submitted to the Superintendent of Schools. Failure to apply will result in termination of employment.

d. Requests for a leave of absence should be made to the Superintendent of Schools.

e. The use of paid sick leave for maternity follows the same rules as indicated above.

f. When an employee has been on extended leave for medical reasons, he/she must provide medical verification, prior to resuming work, that he/she is able to perform all job requirements. If the employee has a temporary or permanent handicapping condition, reasonable accommodations will be considered.

g. Periodic requests may be made by the Superintendent of Schools or his designee for an employee to provide medical verification that he/she is capable of continuing to fulfill his/her job responsibilities.

h. Extended leave of absence for health reasons must also be approved by the State Retirement/Pension System before the leave of absence begins.

Parental Leave – Support Staff

Support services personnel who completed two (2) years of consecutive service with the Board of Education immediately preceding the time of application shall, at their request and with approval by the Superintendent, be granted a leave of absence without pay for child rearing for such period of time as they specify, but not to exceed two (2) years.

Bereavement Leave – Support Staff

Upon the death of the employee's child, parent, parent-in-law, brother, sister, spouse, step-parent, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandchild, grandparent or anyone living in a dependent status (I.R.S. rules) in the employee's household, five (5) consecutive workdays of paid leave will be granted to be taken within seven (7) consecutive calendar days from the date of death. Exceptions may be made when circumstances warrant. Attendance at funerals of other relatives and friends is an acceptable use of personal leave if prior approval is obtained from the employee's principal and/or supervisor. The forty-eight (48) hour notification requirement may be waived, if necessary, to use personal leave for this purpose.

One (1) day of bereavement leave may be approved upon the death of the employee's aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, sister-in-law, or brother-in-law to be taken within seven (7) consecutive calendar days from the date of death.

Temporary Leave Without Pay – Support Staff

Any daily absence without pay requires prior approval. All requests for approved absences without pay (except for personal illness) must be submitted, in writing, to the immediate supervisor and/or principal at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the absence.

All such absences without pay (except for personal illness) will be approved or disapproved for up to ten (10) workdays by the employee's supervisor and/or principal based upon (1) the employee's previous attendance record and (2) the effect the absence will have on the operation of the school or office.

All vacation leave (if applicable) and/or personal leave must be used before leave without pay will be approved. Leave without pay will not be granted retroactively.

Probationary employees and employees who are considered to be less than half time are not eligible for approved leave without pay.

Temporary leave will not ordinarily be approved during the first two (2) weeks and the last two (2) weeks of the student school year, with the exception that unavoidable temporary leave may be approved by the Supervisor of Human Resources.

Approved temporary leave without pay for personal illness is available to employees who have exhausted their accrued sick leave. Approval of leave without pay for personal illness requires prior notification according to the usual procedure for taking sick leave. Extended leave without pay for personal illness will be granted according to the provision for "Extended Leave for Health Reasons".

Reinstatement from Unpaid Leave – Support Staff

An employee on unpaid leave of absence shall notify the Personnel Coordinator, in writing, as to when he/she wants to return to work. The employee shall be placed on the recall list, as of the date the written notification is received, and shall be offered the first comparable position that becomes available on or after the date which the employee states he/she is ready to return to work. An employee who returns to a school system position following an approved unpaid leave of absence will retain all paid leave benefits accrued by the employee prior to the leave of absence.

Failure to notify the Personnel Coordinator of intent to return to work prior to the end of the leave of absence may result in termination of employment and loss of accrued leave benefits. Should the employee refuse a comparable job assignment when returning from

an approved leave, the employee will cease to be employed by the Board of Education, will lose accrued leave benefits, and the employee's name will be removed from the recall list.

Part-time employees do not qualify for any of the leave benefits in Section V.

VI. Tuition Reimbursement

Reimbursement requests will be processed in accordance with the applicable employee agreement. When submitting a request, the following must be forwarded to the Personnel Office for processing:

- 1). Completed Check Request for Tuition Reimbursement form (Form 104B)
- 2). Official transcripts only (Grade reports will not be accepted)
- 3). Proof of payment, i.e. cancelled check, credit card receipt

Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 20

Support Staff:

The Board will reimburse support services employees for tuition for any credits/courses taken which are applicable to an approved planned program working toward an Associate of Arts degree, an approved trade license status, a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree or a specific course with prior approval by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. It is understood that approval will support or enhance employee's skills or opportunities on behalf of children and students in the Caroline County Public Schools. Support services employees who work at least 30 hours per week are eligible for up to \$1500 per fiscal year. Employees hired before July 1, 2013 will continue to receive their current level of benefits, provided they work no less than the same number of hours. Should this occur, they shall be governed by the new level of benefits.

For reimbursement, the following conditions and procedures will be used:

- A. The request for approval must contain a written description of the course/program and the specific costs. In addition, the request must contain information about how the course/program enhances the employee's skills or opportunities on behalf of children and students in CCPS.
- B. The request must be shared and approved by the immediate supervisor.
- C. The request must be submitted and approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee at least one month prior to participation in the course/program.
- D. Any and all scholarships or other tuition reimbursements will be applied first and prior to reimbursement by the Board.

E. Reimbursement is contingent upon the receipt of an official transcript with a grade of "C" or better, or proof of satisfactory completion for non-credit courses.

F. Support services employees receiving reimbursement must complete one year of service with the school system following the reimbursement. Failure to complete required service will result in full reimbursement to the Board.

G. Approved tuition reimbursement requests will be processed within 30 days of submission (provided all prior conditions are met), with the exception of spring and/or summer courses. Tuition reimbursement for spring and/or summer courses will be processed after the employee's first workday in the subsequent school year.

H. No payment shall be made for courses taken prior to employment.

Once approved, a written response will be issued by the Human Resources office.

VII. Benefits

Level of Benefits - Regular Employees

Effective July 1, 2013, the guidelines listed below will be used to determine the appropriate level of hourly employee benefits. Employees hired before July 1, 2013 will continue to receive their current level of benefits, provided they work no less than the same number of hours. Should this occur, they shall be governed by the new level of benefits. Part-time employees receive no benefits with the exception of term life insurance.

- Part-time employee is a person who works less than 6 hours per day or less than 30 hours per week. This employee is not entitled to benefits.

- Half-time employee is a person who works between 6 hours but less than 7 hours per day or at least 30 but less than 35 hours per week. This employee is entitled to half-time benefits.

- Full-time employee is a person who works 7 or more hours per day or 35 or more hours per week. This employee is entitled to full-time benefits.

Tuition Waiver for Children of Employees

The Board will waive the **county share** of tuition for full-time employees who do not live in Caroline County but wish to enroll their children in a Caroline County public school. The child must reside with the employee or be in the legal custody of the employee. Board Policy III.30.20, *Student School Assignments*, governs the choice of a particular

school. Transportation is the responsibility of the employee. The benefit will be reported according to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations. This benefit is not extended to those employees assigned to agencies where an agreement exists resulting in the Board of Education serving as a fiscal agent or lead agency.

Mileage Reimbursement

The Board shall reimburse personnel for authorized travel at the rate equal to that set by the Internal Revenue Service for tax purposes effective upon receipt of official notification.

Retirement Information

Membership in either the Maryland State Retirement System or the Maryland State Pension System is mandatory for all regular certificated and support services employees. All certificated personnel and eligible classifications of support services personnel employed since January 1, 1980, are enrolled in the Teachers' Pension System. Other support services personnel employed since January 1, 1980, are enrolled in the Employees' Pension System. **Pension System eligibility requires that the employee work a minimum of 500 hours each fiscal year.** Effective July 1, 1999, any employee who works less than 500 hours per year will not be enrolled in the Pension System.

Effective July 1, 1998 all members of the Pension Systems were required to make an annual employee contribution. Therefore, all Pension System members have a regular payroll deduction. Effective July 1, 2011 the annual employee contribution was increased to 7%.

Prior to January 1, 1980, certificated personnel and eligible classifications of support services personnel were required to join the Teachers' Retirement System and other support services personnel were required to join the Employees' Retirement System. Both Retirement Systems include an employee contribution. Therefore, all Retirement Systems members have a regular payroll deduction. Members of either Retirement System may withdraw their contributions and their accrued interest and join the appropriate Pension System. This change can be made any time during the calendar year. Personnel interested in changing to the Pension System should contact the Retirement Coordinator.

The State Retirement/Pension Systems require that all persons who wish to be approved for a leave of absence by the Retirement/Pension Systems must submit their request for an approved leave **prior** to the beginning of their leave of absence.

All written communications with the Retirement or Pension Systems must be made through the Retirement Coordinator. Penny H. Bradley, Personnel Coordinator, serves as the Retirement Coordinator for Caroline County Public Schools.

All employees are encouraged to call for an appointment with Mrs. Bradley as soon as they begin considering retirement. At least three months is needed to make all necessary preparations to begin receiving retirement income.

All requests for information regarding the status of an individual's retirement or pension account should be made directly to the State Retirement Office by calling toll free 1-800-492-5909. A State Retirement Counselor will assist you.

Information regarding change in beneficiaries, payroll deductions, and changing to the Pension System is available from the Personnel Coordinator. Brochures outlining the benefits available from the Retirement System or the Pension System are also available upon request.

Sick Leave Payment Upon Retirement

Employees who are retiring with fifteen (15) years of service or more to Caroline County Public Schools shall be paid a pre-determined stipend for unused accumulated sick leave not credited by the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System towards full retirement. This is based on the methodology used by the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System as of 2012.

Worker's Compensation

The Board of Education of Caroline County provides Worker's Compensation and employer's liability insurance in accordance with the requirements of Article 101 of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Generally, this coverage will pay medical expenses for accidents related to a person's employment and also provide a portion of a person's regular salary in order to compensate for lost time. Any person being compensated under Worker's Compensation is entitled to sick leave benefits only for the portion not covered by Worker's Compensation. Worker's Compensation pays no salary during the first three (3) calendar days of absence because of injury. The employee is paid from Worker's Compensation at the rate of 66 2/3% of their weekly salary beginning with the fourth (4th) calendar day. If the employee is absent for fourteen (14) or more consecutive calendar days due to the injury, Worker's Compensation will pay salary benefits for the first three (3) calendar days that were previously not covered. Worker's Compensation payments are tax free, but will

only provide the legal maximum salary for any given week. One-seventh (1/7) of the weekly benefit is paid for each calendar day following the day of injury.

Worker's Compensation checks are sent to the Board of Education, made out to the employee. If the employee wishes to keep the sick leave pay received during the first three (3) calendar days of absence instead of the Compensation benefits, he/she will endorse the Worker's Compensation check and those funds will be credited to the appropriate salary account. Since Worker's Compensation is based on two-thirds (2/3) of the employee's salary, an appropriate number of sick leave days will be reinstated when this check is received by the Board.

If the Worker's Compensation salary benefit is less than the person's usual weekly salary, sick leave may be paid to make up the difference. The employee's accrued sick leave will be reduced on a prorated basis in half-day increments.

To be eligible for Worker's Compensation benefits, the employee must have been injured during the course of his/her employment. The form, "Employee's Report of Job Related Injury or Illness", must be submitted within forty-eight (48) hours of the accident or injury to the appropriate principal or supervisor.

If an employee receives Worker's Compensation benefits and has questions, he/she should contact the Supervisor of Human Resources.

Health Insurance – Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 20

Health Insurance – Support Staff:

The Board agrees to provide two health insurance options for employees as specified below. In addition, the Board agrees to provide a dental insurance plan to employees, which may be combined with either Option 1 or Option 2.

Option 1: A Preferred Provider Option (PPO) plan including a prescription drug program and a vision plan.

Option 2: An Exclusive Provider Option (EPO) plan including a prescription drug program and a vision plan.

The Board agrees to pay for support services employees who work 35 or more hours per week up to 90% of the premium cost for individual (unless otherwise indicated) and 71% of the premium cost for parent/child, husband/wife, and family (unless otherwise indicated) for Option 1 or up to 91% of the premium cost for individual (unless otherwise

indicated) and 74% of the premium cost for parent/child. Husband/wife, & family (unless otherwise indicated) for Option 2.

The Board agrees to pay for support services employees who work from 30 hours per week to less than 35 hours per week up to 55% of the premium cost for individual (unless otherwise indicated) and 40% of the premium cost for parent/child, husband/wife, and family (unless otherwise indicated) for Option 1 or up to 85% of the premium cost for individual (unless otherwise indicated) and 50% of the premium cost for parent/child, husband/wife, and family (unless otherwise indicated) for Option 2.

Insurance Reimbursement Account – Certificated Staff: See Negotiated Agreement Article 21

Insurance Reimbursement Account – Support Staff:

Support services personnel who work 35 or more hours per week and who are not in any Board sponsored basic health insurance plan (health, dental) shall be eligible for a \$300.00 stipend. Support services employees who work from 30 hours per week to less than 35 hours per week and who are not in a Board sponsored basic health insurance plan (health, dental) shall be eligible for a \$150.00 stipend. Employees must submit written proof of their health insurance coverage in order to be eligible for this stipend.

Employees hired before July 1, 2013 will continue to receive their current level of benefits, provided they work no less than the same number of hours. Should this occur, they shall be governed by the new level of benefits.

Term Life Insurance

The Board shall provide, at no cost to the employees, an individual term life insurance policy in the amount equal to one times annual salary or \$15,000 whichever is greater, with a provision for accidental death and dismemberment that will provide up to two (2) times the value of the insurance policy.

Supplemental Term Life Insurance

Employees are eligible to purchase up to \$200,000.00, in \$10,000 increments, of supplemental term life insurance. Evidence of insurability may be required prior to purchase.

VIII. Inclement Weather

Delayed Opening of Schools – Certificated Staff

When deemed advisable by the Superintendent of Schools, schools may open later than normal because of hazardous road conditions. All announcements regarding late openings will be publicized by the same means used to announce school closing for a full day.

Procedures for Delayed Opening – Certificated Staff

1. All school breakfast programs will be cancelled on days when delayed openings are in effect.
2. Teachers are to report to their assigned schools one-half (1/2) hour before students are scheduled to arrive.

Early Dismissal – Certificated Staff

When deemed advisable by the Superintendent of Schools, schools may be dismissed early for inclement weather and/or hazardous road conditions.

Procedures for Early Dismissal – Certificated Staff

All after school events are cancelled when schools are dismissed early, unless determined otherwise by the Superintendent. The Superintendent of Schools, or his/her designee, will determine if non-hourly employees are to be released early.

School Closings – Certificated Staff

Teachers do not report when schools are closed for inclement weather. Twelve (12) month administrators are expected to report for duty, unless directed otherwise by the Superintendent.

When the central office and school offices are closed custodians and maintenance employees are to report to work unless the Superintendent of Schools declares that all school facilities are closed.

If all school facilities are closed each principal is to contact his/her head custodian and inform the head custodian that the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services or his/her designee is in charge of all maintenance and custodial operations. The head custodians are to contact the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services or his/her designee for further instructions.

Delayed Openings – Support Staff

Delayed Openings – On days when a delayed opening is declared by the Superintendent, instructional and health services employees who work 6 or more hours daily, may delay their reporting to work by thirty (30) minutes. Instructional and health services employees who delay their reporting to work by said time agree to assist the school or participate in a school-related activity at a mutually agreed time. Such make up time will not exceed the total amount of time missed. Lost time should be made up by the end of the current payroll period, if possible, but must be made up no later than the end of the following pay period.

All other support services employees must report on time. With approval of the principal/immediate supervisor, employees may make up time missed, up to one-half day at a mutually agreed time. The lost time should be made up by the end of the current payroll period, if possible, but must be made up no later than the end of the following pay period. Employees may use accumulated vacation or personal leave to receive pay for time missed.

Early Dismissal – Support Staff

When schools are dismissed early due to inclement weather, instructional and health services employees who work 6 or more hours daily, will be released thirty (30) minutes after the last bus departs. However, if the Superintendent determines that an emergency exists, he/she may establish another departure time. Such time may be earlier but will not be later than the employee's regular duty day.

All other support services employees are expected to complete their regular assigned workday. However, if the Superintendent determines that an emergency exists he/she may dismiss employees early.

If an employee elects and receives the approval of his/her principal/immediate supervisor to leave earlier than 30 minutes, he/she may be dismissed to deal with personal situations. The lost time should be made up by the end of the current payroll period, if possible, but must be made up no later than the end of the following pay period. Such make up time

will not exceed the total amount of time missed. Employees may use accumulated vacation or personal leave to receive pay for the time missed.

School Closings – Support Staff

This section is intended to communicate expectations for support services personnel when there is inclement weather resulting in school closings.

As a general rule, all support services staff with instructional/student related duties and those with bus and cafeteria responsibilities are to follow the student calendar. That is, if schools are closed, the above persons are not to report to work. The only exception is twelve-month instructional assistants.

During extreme periods of inclement weather, the State Board of Education may rule on make-up days for students, therefore, possibly affecting the employee's work year. In these circumstances, once the State Board has ruled, the local Superintendent will make a final decision regarding whether the employee will make up lost time or lose the lost time resulting in a pay reduction.

For secretaries, data systems operator, twelve-month instructional assistants, custodial/maintenance personnel and non-hourly twelve month employees, please note the instructions below:

Schools are closed with offices open

When schools are closed with offices open, twelve-month school-based and central office secretaries, data systems operator, twelve-month instructional assistants and non-hourly twelve-month employees have the option of working as many of their regularly assigned work hours as they want. These employees may use accumulated vacation or personal leave, if approved by their principal/immediate supervisor, during the status on a half-day or full-day basis. Any time missed during the day may be made up if less than one-half day is involved. These lost hours will be made up no later than the end of the current payroll period, if possible; if not, no later than the end of the following pay period. Use of sick leave to receive payment may result in a request for a doctor's certification of the illness.

School-based secretaries who work less than twelve months, DO NOT REPORT to work.

Custodial personnel are expected to report for a regular eight (8) hour shift as scheduled by the school principal, in consultation with the Supervisor of Plant Operations.

Maintenance personnel are expected to report for a regular eight (8) hour shift as scheduled by the Maintenance Coordinator.

All School Facilities Closed

When all school facilities are closed, proper communication measures will be taken to be sure this announcement is conveyed to affected staff.

School-based secretaries who work less than twelve months, DO NOT REPORT to work.

Twelve-month school-based and central office secretaries, the data systems operator and twelve-month instructional assistants are not to report to work. These employees may use accumulated vacation or personal leave, if approved by their principal/immediate supervisor on a half-day or full-day basis. Any time missed during the day may be made up no later than the end of the current payroll period, if possible; if not, no later than the end of the following pay period. If not made up, the appropriate amount of leave or monetary deduction will occur. Use of sick leave to receive payment may result in a request for a doctor's certification of the illness.

Custodial and maintenance personnel will follow the procedures below during the all school facilities closed status:

- a. The Superintendent, or his designee, will call the Supervisor of Plant Operations, Maintenance Coordinator and all school principals letting them know that no one is to report to work.
- b. Each principal will contact the head custodian and tell him/her that all school facilities are closed and that the Supervisor of Plant Operations and the Maintenance Coordinator are in charge of all maintenance and custodial operations until the Superintendent determines that normal operations can resume.
- c. Head custodians must be available at the telephone number provided to the principal beginning at 6:00 a.m. If the head custodian does not receive a call from the principal by 7:00 a.m., he/she is to call the principal.
- d. Once head custodians are informed that the Supervisor of Plant Operations is in charge, they are to contact the Supervisor of Plant Operations at his office (410-479-1210) or, if no answer, at his home.
- e. During the course of the emergency, the Supervisor of Plant Operations and the Maintenance Coordinator have the authority to determine where and when equipment and personnel will be assigned. No one will be paid for services unless authorized, in advance, by the Supervisor of Plant Operations or the Maintenance Coordinator.
- f. Custodians have the responsibility to contact their head custodian to receive instructions as to possible work assignments. Custodians must be available to receive a message at the telephone number provided to the head custodian.

g. Whenever a custodian is in doubt as to his/her work assignment, he/she has the responsibility to call the head custodian. Custodians who cannot be reached by telephone and who do not call, risk loss of salary and other disciplinary action.

h. Should problems occur with regard to work attendance or performance during the emergency, the school principal will handle the personnel problem according to current procedures.

i. These procedures do not apply to days when schools are closed for students and teachers, but are still open for other staff.

j. Every effort will be made to reschedule lost hours for hourly custodial and maintenance personnel. If the hours cannot be rescheduled, accumulated vacation or personal leave may be used to receive payment, if approved by the principal/immediate supervisor. Use of sick leave to receive payment may result in a request for a doctor's certification of the illness.

IX. Certification

General

All teachers in the state of Maryland must hold a valid teaching certificate in order to be employed. Teaching certificates are issued by the Maryland State Department of Education and are second-class in status until notification of tenure is received. Certificates become first class certificates upon the recommendation of the local Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent annually classifies all certificates as first class unless the teacher is notified otherwise.

Maryland issues the following certificates to individuals upon a request by the Superintendent of Schools:

Standard Professional Certificate (SPC I and SPC II), valid for five years; issued to a professional who is currently employed in a Maryland school;

Advanced Professional Certificate (APC), valid for five years; issued to a professional who meets all requirements for this certificate;

Conditional Certificate (CND), valid for two years; requested by a local school system for individuals who have not completed all of the requirements for professional certification;
or

Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC) is issued for one year to an individual upon the request of a local school system that provides the RTC as an option for certification.

Renewal requirements for each certificate listed above is explained below:

Individuals issued a Conditional Certificate are employed on a one-year contract and can only be renewed upon the request of the Superintendent of Schools and the presentation of the minimum requirement toward professional certification. These outstanding requirements will be provided, in writing, to the employee.

Individuals issued an SPC I must submit the following, prior to its expiration, to receive an SPC II:

- 6 semester hours of acceptable credit that must include reading courses*, if needed;
- verification of 3 years full-time, satisfactory professional school-related experience;
- Present a Professional Development Plan (P.D.P.) designed by the employee in agreement with the local superintendent of schools that will satisfy the requirements for the initial Advanced Professional Certificate (A.P.C.). An approved form must be used to develop your professional development plan.
- \$10.00 processing fee will be deducted from your paycheck, with signed authorization form.

Individuals issued an SPC II must submit the following, prior to its expiration, to receive an initial APC:

- a master's degree in an area directly related to public education, including 6 semester hours related to the teacher's specific discipline or the specialist's specific assignment or 36 post baccalaureate credits directly related to public school education, including a minimum of 21 graduate credits, of which at least 6 credits shall be related to the teacher's specific discipline or the specialist's specific assignment (a maximum of 15 undergraduate and/or MSDE Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits may be earned), or National Board Certification and a minimum of 12 semester hours of approved graduate credit earned after the conferral of the bachelor's or higher degree;
- 6 semester hours of acceptable credit that must include reading courses*, if needed;
- verification of 3 years full-time, satisfactory professional school-related experience;
- Present a Professional Development Plan (P.D.P.) for the subsequent Advanced Professional Certificate designed by the employee and reviewed by the local superintendent of schools, that includes at least six (6) semester hours of approved credit; OR

Earn the equivalent of six (6) semester hours of credit in professional growth activities during the valid period of the current certificate. An approved form must be used to develop your professional development plan.

- \$10.00 processing fee will be deducted from your paycheck, with signed authorization form.

These regulations are different for career and technology education teachers and those holding a Resident Teacher certificate. These individuals should contact the Personnel Coordinator.

Individuals issued an APC must submit the following, prior to its expiration, to renew the APC:

- 6 semester hours of acceptable credit that must include reading courses*, if needed;
- verification of 3 years of full-time, satisfactory school-related experience within the 5 years immediately preceding the issuance of the renewed APC;
- Present a Professional Development Plan (P.D.P.) for the subsequent Advanced Professional Certificate designed by the employee and reviewed by the local superintendent of schools, that includes at least six (6) semester hours of approved credit; OR
Earn the equivalent of six (6) semester hours of credit in professional growth activities during the valid period of the current certificate. An approved form must be used to develop your professional development plan.
- \$10.00 processing fee will be deducted from your paycheck, with signed authorization form.

Accumulation of points for those who have already achieved the Advanced Professional Certificate may be retroactive to the date of issuance of said certificate.

Failure to accumulate six (6) points during any five-year period will result in reversion of certificate to conditional status with the possibility of the loss of position.

The equivalent of six (6) hours of credit (points) in professional growth activities shall be according to the following:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Point</u>	<u>Maximum Allowed For Any 5 yr Period</u>
1. Workshop participation (local or state)	1	6
2. Travel (approved itinerary by Superintendent in advance) for each two-week trip	1	3
3. Authorship Articles must be 1,500 words or more and published	1	3

	in state or national professional magazine		
4.	Curriculum Revision for each full week	1	3
5.	College or in-service teaching for each semester hour allowed by the course	1	6
6.	Participation in a planned lecture series, four or more activities with advanced approval required	1	3
7.	Chairmanship in a State or national professional organization for one year	1	3
8.	Supervising Teacher for four to six-week assignment	1	3
9.	Teaching adult classes for a minimum of fifteen contact hours	1	3
10.	Serving as a mentor teacher	1	3
11.	Membership on a school improvement team or school committee chair for one school year	1	3
12.	Representative on the School System Improvement Council for one school year	1	3
13.	Serving as assessor in Assessment Center	1	3
14.	Presentation at state or national conference	1	3
15.	Service as MSPAP writer/	1	3

reader/scorer

16. Providing in-service program at school or county level	1	3
17. Service on county or state task force, steering committee, or special committee	1	3
18. Continuing Education Units (CEU) when prior approval is granted- Points based on CEU's earned	1	3
19. Other professional growth activities with advanced approval by the Superintendent of Schools		

Administrators and supervisors are only permitted to receive APC renewals points for the following activities from the above list of approved professional growth activities:

1. Workshop participation
2. Travel
3. Authorship
5. College or in-service teaching (non-county sponsored)
6. Lecture series
7. Chairmanship in State or National organization
13. Serving as an assessor
14. Presentation at State or National convention
17. Serving on a special committee
18. Continuing Education Units
19. Other

Pre-approval by the Supervisor of Human Resources in advance of the activity is required.

*Reading Requirement: If you hold a certificate in early childhood education, elementary education, and special education at those levels, 12 semester hours in the following content are required:

- Processes and Acquisition of Reading
- Instruction of Reading
- Materials for Teaching Reading
- Assessment for Reading Instruction

If you hold a certificate in secondary education, N-12/K-12 education, and special education at those levels, 6 semester hours in the following content are required:

Methods of Teaching Reading in the Secondary Content Area, Part I
Methods of Teaching Reading in the Secondary Content Area, Part II

Superintendent's Approval: The APC. renewal is subject to the approval of the Superintendent of Schools as per state regulations. Approval is hereby granted by the Superintendent of Schools for professionally certificated employees to earn six (6) hours of credit (points) in professional growth activities in the place of college credit, unless notified otherwise in writing. Such notification shall occur a minimum of one (1) calendar year in advance of the certificate renewal date.

Senior Teacher Exemption: If a teacher has twenty-five (25) years or more service or is fifty-five (55) years of age or older, the requirements for the APC. renewal can be waived by the Superintendent of Schools. A written request must be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools at least one (1) year prior to the expiration of the certificate requesting an exemption. Decisions will be based upon the individual's documented job performance. If the request is denied, the individual will be required to satisfy all applicable certification standards. Failure to fulfill the requirements may result in the issuance of a conditional certificate or loss of position.

NOTE: Reading requirement will not be waived through Senior Teacher Exemption. This renewal option only applies to certificated staff currently under contract.

Contact Hours: Points will be awarded for participation in non-credit granting activities based on one (1) point for a minimum of fifteen (15) contact hours in any one individual activity.

Obtaining A Certificate

Upon employment, new teachers who do not already hold a valid Maryland teaching certificate must complete an application form provided by the Personnel Office. The completed application form and a signed authorization form for a \$10.00 payroll deduction must be completed and submitted to the Personnel Office prior to the opening of school. The appropriate teaching certificate will be requested for the teacher. When the certificate is received, the original will be forwarded to the teacher. Official transcripts of undergraduate and/or graduate grades must be submitted with all certificate applications. New teachers should also have their test scores sent directly to the State Department of Maryland or to Caroline County from the testing service.

Teachers who need to renew their teaching certificate (or in the case of conditional certificate holders, obtain a new one) must submit the required official transcripts, a completed certification request form, and an authorization form for a \$10.00 payroll

deduction to the Personnel Office no later than the day before the expiration date of their certificate. (Certificates are always effective beginning July 1 or January 1.) Those needing to present passing test scores for certificates must meet the same deadline. Failure to meet this deadline may result in loss of certification, cancellation of teacher's contract and loss of continuing employment status.

Properly processed certificate renewal requests will be forwarded to the Maryland State Department of Education on behalf of the teacher. Upon receipt of the new certificate, the original copy of the new certificate will be forwarded to the teacher.

Certification Evaluation

If a teacher wishes to obtain a formal Maryland State Department of Education evaluation to determine whether or not he/she meets the certification requirements for other certification areas, the teacher must apply to the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Certification. An official request form for this purpose is available from the principal or the Personnel Office upon request. This form must be completed and returned to Penny Bradley, Personnel Officer. In addition to this completed form, the individual making the request must be sure that the Board of Education has all necessary official transcripts on file. These will be forwarded with the certification request form. When a teacher applies to the Maryland State Department of Education for an evaluation, the evaluation is routinely sent to the Personnel Office and then forwarded to the individual. If the person is given a new certificate endorsement on the basis of the evaluation request, the new certificate will also be sent to the Personnel Office and then forwarded to the teacher. The Maryland State Department of Education will not complete more than two (2) evaluations per year for a teacher.

Certification Coordinator

A Certification Coordinator is available to provide information regarding the certification process and to approve courses that are taken to meet certificate renewal requirements. However, the Coordinator cannot provide official approval of courses required for specific certificate endorsements. Such information is available from the Maryland State Department by using the certification evaluation process. Employees should direct all certification questions to the school system's Human Resources office, which may find it necessary to consult with a state certification specialist.