

SOUTH TIPPAH SCHOOL DISTRICT



PERSONNEL HANDBOOK

Revised June 2024

PREFACE

The design of an employee handbook is certainly multipurpose. An employee handbook serves as a guide for employees when they are seeking to understand the policies put in place by the South Tippah School Board as it relates to their employment. This handbook also serves as a resource to be used by employees when trying to answer specific questions relating to the expectations of the South Tippah School Board.

It must be noted that no handbook can encompass every question or problem that may arise during an employee's term of employment. If there are questions, one should first consult his/her immediate supervisor before consulting the superintendent and then the South Tippah School Board.

All policies, procedures, and practices of the South Tippah School District are in accordance with state and federal regulations governing the operation of public schools. Any statutory or policy change affecting the operation of public schools will be reflected in modifications of the South Tippah School Board Policy Manual and will serve as the ultimate determiner of school policies and procedures.

Changes and/or modifications of policies and procedures are at the discretion of the South Tippah School Board and may occur at any time; therefore, The South Tippah School Board Policy Manual will serve as the ultimate determiner of school policies and procedures.

Tony Elliott, Superintendent
South Tippah School District

District Office Staff

Phone: 837-7156/Fax: 837-1362

Bus Shop: 837-9600 or 882-1518 (cell)

Oscar Shannon Building 837-3677/Special Education Office 837-7630

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Administrative Assistant and Capital Assets Coordinator		Pat Long	662-837-7156
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Director of Federal Programs, Curriculum Director, EL Coordinator, Homeless Liaison, Assistant Superintendent	gatesk@stsd.ms	Kelly Gates	662-837-7156
Director of Transportation, Director of Alternative School, Asst. District Test Coordinator and Asbestos Coordinator, Teacher Licensure		Stacey Street	662-837-9600 662-882-1518
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District Dyslexia Coordinator		Shanna Ligon	662-837-3677
Technology Coordinator		Clint Stroupe	662-837-3677

District Office Address: 402 Greenlee Avenue, Ripley, MS 38663

South Tippah Pre-K Address: 100 CR 817, Ripley, MS 38663

Principals of the South Tippah School District

Blue Mountain School	Mr. Lee Holt	email: holtl@stsd.ms	662-685-4706
Pine Grove School	Mr. John Eaton	email: eatonjohn@stsd.ms	662-837-7789
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Ripley Middle School	Mr. Tommy Ozbirn	email: ozbirnt@stsd.ms	662-837-7959
Ripley High School	Ms. Anita Hood	email: hooda@stsd.ms	662-837-7583
Tippah Career & Tech. Center	Mr. Kevin Williams	email: williamskev@stsd.ms	662-837-9798

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The booklet was prepared to acquaint employees with various benefit descriptions, services, and guidelines associated with the South Tippah School District. It should serve as a reference point to answer the questions that are most frequently asked by employees. However, it is not intended to substitute for or supersede SECTION G: PERSONNEL of the South Tippah School District Policy Manual. More precise definitions of the policies may be found in the South Tippah School District Policy Manual which is located on the South Tippah School District website. A copy of that policy manual may also be found at any district facility or in the District Administrative Office. In this regard, all policies and procedures summarized in this booklet, or any other policy, procedure, practice, rule and benefit relative to employment with the South Tippah School District are subject to unilateral change at the sole option and discretion of the South Tippah School District Board of Trustees.

Policies, procedures, and other information described in this booklet are not intended to be construed to constitute contractual obligations of any kind or a contract for employment between the South Tippah School District and any of its employees. Additionally, statements made by other South Tippah School District employees that are contrary to any South Tippah School District policy, or state or federal rule, regulation, law, or statute, are not binding and give the employee no rights or expectations.

This booklet is not a contract and does not confer any contractual rights or interests.

NONDISCRIMINATION/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The South Tippah School District values a work force that reflects the citizens of the community. The South Tippah School District is committed to promoting and affirming informal and formal practices to support the recruitment, retention and empowerment of a professional work force that embraces the diversity among students and staff. The South Tippah School District is committed to the belief that all persons are valued for his or her individual characteristics, talents and contributions. There will be no discrimination in the South Tippah School District against employees or applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnicity, gender, national origin, disability or handicap, socioeconomic background, age or other characteristics protected by law.

Harassment or discriminatory behavior that denies individual rights or access to equal educational opportunities includes comments, name calling, physical conduct or other expressive behavior directed at an individual or group that intentionally demeans the sex, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, marital status, disability, or handicapping condition of the individual or individuals or creates an intimidating hostile or demeaning environment for education.

South Tippah School District employees shall immediately report to the supervisor or the superintendent any suspected harassment or discriminatory behavior by an employee or student.

SOUTH TIPPAH SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION STATEMENT AND MISSION STATEMENT

VISION

To provide a community minded educational program with an emphasis on STEM, career, and character education through highly effective teachers and staff integrating technology into instruction while achieving an “A” accountability rating.

MISSION

To build a strong community through quality education.

COMMITMENTS TO EXCELLENCE

We are committed to becoming one of the best school districts in the State of Mississippi by considering student needs priority one and by striving to create an environment that impels employees and students to perform to their full potential.

PRINCIPLES:

We believe that:

- Students are our first priority and that all children are capable of learning if empowered and motivated to do so.
- Everyone will be treated with respect and dignity.
- Everyone will behave with the highest level of integrity and honesty.
- All people will be lifelong learners.

An ideal work environment is a place where people of all backgrounds can trust through experience that their talents, skills, and unique contributions will be fully utilized.

CORE COMMITMENT:

As employees of the South Tippah School District, we will strive for excellence by taking pride in a job well done.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LICENSE RENEWAL

As of July 1, 1997, **all certified employees became known as licensed employees and renewal of the educator licenses will be based on the individual license holder meeting specific requirements established by the Mississippi Department of Education.** Participation in the district's approved "professional development" plan WILL NOT renew an individual's educator license.

License renewal is a personal responsibility. The basic requirements for renewal of standard teacher licenses are listed below. Administrator license renewal requires participation in the Mississippi Department of Education SEMI modules in addition to the stated basic requirements.

Within each five-year cycle, an individual holding a valid, standard educator license must complete the following items to renew his/her license.

Current requirements for Renewal of a five-year standard license:

Class A:

Ten (10) continuing education units (CEUs) in content or job/skill related area

OR

Three (3) semester hours in content or job/skill related area AND Five (5) continuing education units (CEUs) in content or job/skill related area

OR

Six (6) semester hours in content or job/skill related area

OR

Completion of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards process

Class AA, AAA or AAAA:

Three (3) semester hours in content or job/skill related area

OR

Five (5) continuing education units (CEUs) in content or job/skill related area

OR

Completion of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards process

Standard Career Administrator:

Seventy (70) School Executive Management Institute (SEMI) credits

OR

Six (6) hours of coursework

OR

35 SEMI credits AND 3 hours coursework

OR

Completion of a specialist or doctoral degree in educational administration/leadership

Reinstatement of an Expired License

An expired five-year standard license may be reinstated with one of the following options:

- six hours of college coursework
- valid out-of-state license
- documentation from PERS for retired educators
- CEUs

Reinstatement of an Expired License (Policy)

Resource List of Classes and CEUs for Educator License Renewal

Renewal of License

Mississippi e-learning for Educators

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with the South Tippah School District's commitment to professional excellence, it is the responsibility of the district to provide adequate staff development for all employees on an as needed basis. It is a requirement of the South Tippah School District Board that all employees participate in the South Tippah School District Staff Development Plan.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Eligible employees of South Tippah School District are provided the following range of benefits. A number of the programs such as Social Security, Workers' Compensation, state disability, and unemployment insurance cover all eligible employees in the manner prescribed by law. Benefits eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. The principal or supervisor can identify the programs for which the employee is eligible. Details of many of these programs can be found in the South Tippah School District Board Policy Manual.

The following benefit programs are available to eligible employees:

BENEFITS CONTINUATION (COBRA)

The Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under the South Tippah School District's health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in an employee's hours or a leave of absence; an employee's divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements.

Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at the South Tippah School District's group rates plus an administration fee. The South Tippah School District provides each eligible employee with a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when an employee becomes eligible for coverage under the South Tippah School District's health insurance plan. The notice contains important information about the employee's rights and obligations.

CAFETERIA PLAN (Section 125 flexible Benefit Plan)

The South Tippah School District participates in the Section 125 Flexible Benefit Plan. Health insurance premiums of the participant paid through payroll deduction are exempt from federal and state income taxes.

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT RETIREMENT SYSTEM

A booklet outlining the benefits of the public employment retirement system may be obtained at the following website: www.pers.ms.gov .

INSURANCE

The South Tippah School District participates in the state health insurance plan for school employees. Health insurance is available for all full time employees. A full time employee is defined as one who works a minimum of 20 hours per week. The state life insurance plan contributes one-half of the premium per annum for life insurance.

Other insurance coverage is available to employees. Information about the various possibilities will be covered with employees during open enrollment in September.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE

The South Tippah School District provides the Workers' Compensation Insurance Program at no cost to employees. The program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires treatment. An employee should notify his or her immediate supervisor **IMMEDIATELY** whenever an injury is incurred whether or not medical attention is needed.

SICK LEAVE

The South Tippah School District provides paid sick leave benefits to all eligible employees for temporary absence due to illnesses or injuries. Eligible employees may use sick leave benefits for an absence due to personal illness or injury or that of a family member. Licensed employees please see Board Policy GBRI-STD for details. Teacher Assistants, Teacher Aides, Library Aides, Secretaries and Custodial employees please see Board Policy GBRI-C for details. Cafeteria employees please refer to the cafeteria handbook.

MEDICAL LEAVE

The South Tippah School District provides medical leave benefits for eligible employees for illnesses extending beyond the depletion of accrued sick leave. Please refer to the South Tippah School District Policy Manual GBRI-STD - Page 3 Leaves and Absences and the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (P. L. 103-3)

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

The South Tippah School District provides family leaves of absence to eligible employees who wish to take time off from work duties to fulfill family obligations relating directly to childbirth, adoption, or placement of a foster child; or to care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition. A serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment, physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; or continuing treatment by a health care provider.

Eligible employees should make requests for family leave to the immediate supervisor at least thirty (30) days in advance of foreseeable events and as soon as possible for unforeseeable events.

Employees requesting family leave related to the serious health condition of a child, spouse, or parent may be required to submit a health care provider's statement verifying the need for a family leave to provide care, its beginning and expected ending dates, and the estimated time required.

Eligible employees may request up to a maximum twelve (12) weeks of family leave within any twelve (12) month period. Any combination of family leave and medical leave may not exceed this maximum limit. Employees will be required to first use any accrued paid leave time before taking unpaid family leave. Paid medical leave and unpaid Family Leave will not exceed twelve (12) weeks. Married employee couples may be restricted to a combined total of twelve (12) weeks leave within any twelve (12) month

period for childbirth, adoption, or placement of a foster child; or to care for a parent with a serious health condition.

Subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans, the South Tippah School District will continue to provide health insurance benefits for the full period of the approved family leave. Benefit accruals, such as vacation, sick leave, or holiday benefits, will be suspended during the leave and will resume upon return to active employment.

In order to properly schedule an employee's return to work, the employee on family leave is requested to provide the district with at least two week advance notice of the date the employee intends to return to work. When family leave ends, the employee will be reinstated to the same position, if it is available, or to an equivalent position for which the employee is qualified.

If an employee fails to return to work on the agreed upon return date, the South Tippah School District will assume that the employee has resigned.

MILITARY LEAVE

A military leave of absence will be granted to employees who are absent from work because of service in the United States Uniformed Services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Advance notice of military service is required, unless military necessity prevents such notice or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable. Employees will continue to receive full pay while on leave for training assignments (up to 15 days) and shorter absences. The portion of any military leaves of absence in excess of two weeks will be unpaid. However, employees may use any available paid time off for the absence.

Continuation of health insurance benefits is available as required by USERRA based on the length of the leave and subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of the applicable plans for which the employee is otherwise eligible. Vacation and sick leave will continue to accrue during a military leave of absence. Employees on military leave for up to thirty (30) days are required to return to work as soon as is reasonably possible after the end of service, allowing reasonable travel time. Employees on longer military leave must apply for reinstatement in accordance with USERRA and all applicable state laws. Employees returning from military leave will be placed in the position they would have attained had they remained continuously employed or a comparable one depending on the length of the military service in accordance with USERRA. The employee will be treated as though he or she had continuously been employed for purposes of determining benefits based on length of service.

PERSONAL LEAVE

The South Tippah School District provides leave with pay to eligible employees who wish to take time off from work duties to fulfill personal obligations. As soon as an eligible employee becomes aware of the need for a personal leave, he or she should request a leave from his or her supervisor.

Licensed employees (who work less than twelve months per year): Personal days may be taken for a period of up to two (2) calendar days every year by licensed employees who are not on twelve month contracts.

MS CODE ANN. 37-7-307 (2016)

Beginning with the school year 1983-1984, each licensed employee at the beginning of each school year shall be credited with a minimum personal leave allowance, with pay of two (2) days for absences caused by personal reasons during that school year.

Personal leave may be taken on the first day of the school term, the last day of the school term, on a day previous to a holiday or a day after a holiday if, on the applicable day, an immediate family member of the employee is being deployed for military service.

Personal leave may be taken on a day previous to a holiday or a day after a holiday if an employee of a school district has either a minimum of ten (10) years experience as an employee of that school district or a minimum of thirty (30) days of unused accumulated leave that has been earned while employed in that school district.

Personal leave may be taken on the first day of the school term, the last day of the school term, on a day previous to a holiday or a day after a holiday if, on the applicable day, the employee has been summoned to appear for jury duty or as a witness in court.

OVERTIME

Policy Code: GCRAA Fair Labor Standards Policy

FAIR LABOR STANDARDS POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the South Tippah School District is in compliance with the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), 29 U.S.C. '201 et seq.

EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

Certain employees are exempt from coverage of the FLSA and are not subject to compensation for overtime work. Exempt employees include executive, administrative and professional employees. Examples include, but are not limited to, certified professional employees such as teachers, counselors, supervisors and administrators. Certain non-certified administrators are also exempt and include business managers, transportation directors, maintenance directors and other similar administrative and supervisory positions. Supervisors should seek advice from the school board attorney if there is a question whether a position is exempt.

COVERED EMPLOYEES

Employees in the job classifications listed below are generally considered to be non-exempt and are covered by the FLSA unless a specific exception exists. In those instances, the reasons for the exempt status will be specifically outlined.

Secretaries	Bookkeepers
Clerks	Mechanics
Janitors	Cafeteria Personnel
Assistant Teachers	Substitute Teachers
Bus Drivers	Maintenance Personnel
Security	Data Entry Operators

In some instances, employees may perform dual jobs for the District, such as bus driver/maintenance worker. If duties of the two jobs require the employee to work overtime, the amount due will be calculated using the method described below under OVERTIME PAY.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS

No employment relationship is created between student teachers or students and the District due to the circumstances surrounding their activities.

No employment relationship is created between the District and individuals who volunteer and donate their services to the District as a public service without contemplation of pay.

The hiring of off-duty policemen or deputies on a part time basis by the District for crowd control or for security purposes does not create a joint employment relationship between the District and the city or county with which the policemen or deputies are employed. The District is separate and distinct and acts entirely independent of the other governmental entities.

HOURS WORKED

The work week for the South Tippah School District begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday. Each employee subject to the FLSA shall be paid for all hours worked. Compensable time includes all time that an employee is required to be on duty. Coffee breaks, waiting time and meal periods, which are frequently interrupted by calls to duty, are hours worked and are compensable.

Hours worked shall be accurately recorded by each employee on the monthly or weekly time sheet in the form which is provided by the District. Employees using time sheets shall furnish all information requested and shall record the exact time of arrival and departure from work. Employees are expected to arrive and depart at the time specified by his/her supervisor unless requested to work overtime by his/her immediate supervisor. All overtime shall be recorded by each employee on the time sheet or time card. No overtime shall be worked without prior written permission by the employee's immediate supervisor. In the event of emergencies requiring work in excess of 40 hours in a work week, the employee shall inform his/her supervisor as soon as practicable regarding the overtime worked.

BREAKS AND MEAL PERIODS

Although not required by the FLSA, employee should be allowed coffee breaks of no more than 15 minutes when appropriate. The time of the day for breaks and their length shall be determined by each employee's immediate supervisor.

Meal periods for some employees shall be counted as hours worked since they are frequently interrupted by calls to duty and therefore are compensable. Those employees with bona fide meal periods of 30 minutes or more shall be completely relieved of duty for the purpose of eating a regular meal and shall not be required to perform any work during that meal period.

MINIMUM WAGE

All employees subject to the FLSA shall be paid not less than the current minimum wage.

OVERTIME PAY

It is the policy of the District that compensation for overtime work will be paid in the form of compensatory time off. Compensatory time shall be awarded on the basis of 1 ½ hours for each hour of overtime worked. An employee will not be permitted to accumulate more than 240 compensatory time hours (160 regular hours). Employee must take the compensatory time when it is agreeable with his/her supervisor. However, the supervisor's consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.

In the event the District decides to pay for overtime work in the form of monetary remuneration, the employee shall be paid not less than 1 ½ times his/her regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 hours in a work week. Overtime pay due an employee shall be computed on the basis of hours worked in each work week.

For employees paid on an hourly rate, the overtime will be based on that hourly rate. For employees paid on a salaried basis, the monthly salary will be reduced to its weekly hourly rate, from which overtime compensation will be calculated. Employees shall be paid for each and every hour worked. For those employees working 2 or more jobs for the District, overtime pay shall be calculated on the basis of a blended hourly rate on all jobs worked calculated by dividing the total amount of remuneration received in a work week by the total hours worked in that work week. The employee shall be paid one-half of the blended hourly rate times the number of hours worked over 40.

ADJUSTMENT OF SCHEDULES

Supervisors may adjust schedules within a work week to prevent the necessity of an employee working more than 40 hours in that work week.

RECORD KEEPING

The Superintendent shall require all records on wages, hours and other items to be maintained in accordance with the FLSA. Wage and Hour posters shall be displayed at each District worksite.

ENFORCEMENT

District shall, at all times, cooperate with authorized representatives of the Department of Labor who may visit a work site. If an employee believes he/she has not been paid in accordance with the FLSA, the employee shall notify his/her supervisor and the Superintendent. Employees who believe they have not been paid in accordance with the FLSA may file a complaint with the United States Department of Labor. The District shall not retaliate in any manner whatsoever against an employee for the filing of such complaints. District employees responsible for supervising employees subject to the FLSA who willfully violate the terms of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action by the District. Any disciplinary action taken by the District will be in addition to any relief granted an employee by the U.S. Department of Labor or a court of law.

EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS

ACTIVITY GATE RECEIPT POLICY

Gate receipts from all school activities shall be handled as follows:

1. At any event at a school for which a fee is charged for admission, pre-numbered, sequential tickets shall be used.
2. Numbered ticket boxes, containing a sequence of pre-numbered tickets and currency for making change, shall be prepared prior to activity event by the Athletic Director, Assistant Principal, Principal, or designee. The ticket numbers and amount of currency shall be Recorded.
3. Gatekeepers will be held accountable for the remainder of tickets and currency until The contents of the tickets boxes are turned over to the Athletic Director, Assistant Principal, or Principal in charge of the activity/event.
4. Gatekeepers will sign off on number of tickets sold as they are turned in.
5. The counting of currency shall be done by a minimum of two (2) members of the staff with different staff members selected for each event. Those staff members in charge of currency counting will be held accountable for such funds until they are turned over to the Athletic Director, Assistant Principal or Principal. After the money is counted personnel who worked respective gates will be asked to sign-off on the ticket numbers used compared to the amount of money deposited.
6. The Athletic Director, Assistant Principal or Principal shall deposit or night drop deposit the total amount of the money collected within 2 business days.
7. Excess tickets and a record, signed by each person counting, of the amount of currency collected shall remain in the ticket box for the school bookkeeper or Principal to check against bank deposit.
8. The school bookkeeper or the Principal shall record the amount of activity event deposit in such a manner that it will easily be identified.
9. The Principal or the school bookkeeper shall keep such records needed to provide information on demand to the Superintendent, District Business Officer, Auditor and/or School Board regarding attendance/ticket sales/counting receipts, concessions (if applicable), gross gate receipts, expenses related to event, net income from event and deposits of money from gates/receipts/concessions for each event.
10. If the school runs a concession, the counting and depositing of concession receipts shall be done in the same manner as gate receipts.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

Employees of the South Tippah School District are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect positively on the school district and the community, thus promoting a positive environment for teaching, learning and student well-being.

The dignity of students and of the educational environment shall be maintained at all times. Unseemly dress, conduct or the use of abusive, foul or profane language in the presence of students is expressly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

All South Tippah School District (STSD) employees shall exhibit ethical and professional behavior, at all times, and administer fair and impartial application of all policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines by the Board in relation to all students. All employees shall maintain a clear supervisory relationship with students at all times.

Fraternization between employees and students on a personal level either on campus or off campus shall not be permitted.

Employees shall not inappropriately associate with students at any time in any manner which may give the appearance of impropriety, including, but not limited to, the creation or participation in any situation or activity which could be considered abusive or sexually suggestive or which involves illegal substance such as drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. Any sexual or other inappropriate conduct with a student by any employee will subject the offender to potential criminal liability, discipline up to, and including termination of employment.

Fraternization via the internet between employee and student is strictly prohibited and violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees are subject to discipline for any inappropriate statements made pursuant to their official duties.

Employees are also subject to discipline for any inappropriate statements made whether on duty or off duty, if such statements disrupt the school environment, impedes the employee's ability to perform his or her duties, or reflects poorly on his or her character or the character of others.

VIOLATIONS

Violations of this policy shall be reported and discussed in a conference between the employee and the school principal (or superintendent and principal if a principal is in violation of this policy). If the principal or superintendent finds the complaint to be factual, he or she shall issue a written reprimand to the employee(s) involved. This reprimand shall become a part of the employee's personnel file.

Severe violations or continuous violation of this policy may lead to an employee being suspended, dismissed or non-renewed.

Employees shall have the right to appeal any disciplinary action taken against them by following the proper chain of command as specified in the district's "Employee Grievance Procedure" policy and the provisions of the Education Employees Procedure Law (EEPL). Please refer to the **EEPL Handbook**, published by MSBA.

ETHICS

(Taken from the South Tippah School District Board Policy Manual)

An educator's professional behavior must conform to an ethical code. The code must be idealistic and at the same time practical, so that it can apply reasonably to all professional educators. The professional educator acknowledges that the schools belong to the public they serve for the purpose of providing educational opportunities to all. However, the educator assumes responsibility for providing professional leadership in the school and community. The responsibility requires the educator to maintain standards of exemplary professional conduct. It must be recognized that the educator's actions will be viewed and appraised by the community, professional associates, and students. To these ends the educator subscribes to the following statements of standards.

The professional educator:

Makes the well-being of students the fundamental value of all decision-making and actions.

Fulfills professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity.

Supports the principle of due process and protects the civil and human rights of all individuals.

Obeys local, state, and national laws and does not knowingly join or support organizations that advocate, directly or indirectly, the overthrow of the government.

Respects the governing board of education's policies and administrative rules and regulations.

Avoids using positions for personal gain through political, social, religious, economic, or other influence.

Maintains the standards and seeks to improve the effectiveness of the profession through research and continuing professional development.

Honors all contracts until fulfillment, release, or dissolution mutually agreed upon by all parties to contract.

Promotes and works in harmony with the entire interscholastic program of the school.

Actively promotes good sportsmanship by working with students, administrators, parents, booster clubs, and spectators in extracurricular events.

Takes an active role in the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse, while stressing the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Refrains from using rude or obscene language.

Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct

Each educator, upon entering the teaching profession, assumes a number of obligations, one of which is to adhere to a set of principles which defines professional conduct. These principles are reflected in the following code of ethics which sets forth to the education profession and the public it serves standards of professional conduct and procedures for implementation.

This code shall apply to all persons licensed according to the rules established by the Mississippi State Board of Education and protects the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators.

Ethical conduct is any conduct which promotes the health, safety, welfare, discipline and morals of students and colleagues.

Unethical conduct is any conduct that impairs the license holder's ability to function in his/her employment position or a pattern of behavior that is detrimental to the health, safety, welfare, discipline, or morals of students and colleagues.

Any educator or administrator license may be revoked or suspended for engaging in unethical conduct relating to any educator/student relationship (Standard 4). Superintendents shall report to the Mississippi Department of Education license holders who engage in unethical conduct relating to any educator/student relationship (Standard 4).

Code of Ethics Standards

Standard 1: Professional Conduct

An educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.

- 1.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Encouraging and supporting colleagues in developing and maintaining high standards
 - b. Respecting fellow educators and participating in the development of a professional teaching environment
 - c. Engaging in a variety of individual and collaborative learning experiences essential to professional development designed to promote student learning
 - d. Providing professional education services in a nondiscriminatory manner
 - e. Maintaining competence regarding skills, knowledge, and dispositions relating to his/her organizational position, subject matter and pedagogical practices
 - f. Maintaining a professional relationship with parents of students and establish appropriate communication related to the welfare of their children

- 1.2 Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- a. Harassment of colleagues
 - b. Misuse or mismanagement of tests or test materials
 - c. Inappropriate language on school grounds or any school-related activity
 - d. Physical altercations
 - e. Failure to provide appropriate supervision of students and reasonable disciplinary actions

Standard 2. Trustworthiness

An educator should exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice and does not knowingly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district or educational institution.

- 2.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- a. Properly representing facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression
 - b. Advocating for fair and equitable opportunities for all children
 - c. Embodying for students the characteristics of honesty, diplomacy, tact, and fairness
- 2.2 Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- a. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting any of the following:
 1. employment history, professional qualifications, criminal history, certification/recertification
 2. information submitted to local, state, federal, and/or other governmental agencies
 3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel
 4. reasons for absences or leave
 5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry or investigation
 - b. Falsify records or direct or coerce others to do so

Standard 3. Unlawful Acts

An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes and local school board policies.

3. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the commission or conviction of a felony or sexual offense. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought or situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted.

Standard 4. Educator/Student Relationship

An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.

- 4.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- a. Fulfilling the roles of mentor and advocate for students in a professional relationship. A professional relationship is one where the educator maintains a position of teacher/student authority while expressing concern, empathy, and encouragement for students
 - b. Nurturing the intellectual, physical, emotional, social and civic potential of all students
 - c. Providing an environment that does not needlessly expose students to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement
 - d. Creating, supporting, and maintaining a challenging learning environment for all students
- 4.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:
- a. Committing any act of child abuse
 - b. Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment
 - c. Committing or soliciting any unlawful sexual act
 - d. Engaging in harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, national origin, religion or disability
 - e. Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs
 - f. Soliciting, encouraging, participating or initiating inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, physical or romantic relationship with a student.
- Examples of these acts may include but not be limited to:
1. sexual jokes
 2. sexual remarks
 3. sexual kidding or teasing
 4. sexual innuendo
 5. pressure for dates or sexual favors
 6. inappropriate touching, fondling, kissing or grabbing
 7. rape
 8. threats of physical harm
 9. sexual assault
 10. electronic communication such as texting
 11. invitation to social networking
 12. remarks about a student's body
 13. consensual sex

Standard 5. Educator Collegial Relationships

An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with colleagues, both in and outside the classroom

5. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the following:
- a. Revealing confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law
 - b. Harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system

- c. Interfering with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities
- d. Discriminating against or coercing a colleague on the basis of race, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability or family status
- e. Using coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions of colleagues

Standard 6. Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use or Possession

An educator should refrain from the use of alcohol and/or tobacco during the course of professional practice and should never use illegal or unauthorized drugs

- 6.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Factually representing the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug use and abuse to students during the course of professional practice
- 6.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Being under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs
 - b. Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented as being under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcoholic beverages. A school-related activity includes but is not limited to, any activity that is sponsored by a school or a school system or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum such as club trips, etc., which involve students
 - c. Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented using tobacco

Standard 7. Public Funds and Property

An educator shall not knowingly misappropriated, divert, or use funds, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

- 7.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Maximizing the positive effect of school funds through judicious use of said funds
 - b. Modeling for students and colleagues the responsible use of public property
- 7.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Knowingly misappropriating, diverting or using funds, personnel, property or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain
 - b. Failing to account for funds collected from students, parents or any school-related function
 - c. Submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay
 - d. Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts
 - e. Using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing body

Standard 8. Remunerative Conduct

An educator should maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.

- 8.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Insuring that institutional privileges are not used for personal gain
 - b. Insuring that school policies or procedures are not impacted by gifts or gratuities from any person or organization

- 8.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local governing body
 - b. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local school board
 - c. The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. (This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service)

Standard 9. Maintenance of Confidentiality

An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information covered by confidentiality agreements.

- 9.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Keeping in confidence information about students that has been obtained in course of professional service unless disclosure serves a legitimate purpose or is required by law
 - b. Maintaining diligently the security of standardized test supplies and resources

- 9.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Sharing confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status/income and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law
 - b. Violating confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, and violating local school board or state directions for the use of tests
 - c. Violating other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy

Standard 10. Breach of Contract or Abandonment of Employment

An educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local school board or educational agency for the duration of the contract.

10. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the school board
 - b. Refusing to perform services required by the contract

CHAIN OF COMMAND

The personnel of the South Tippah School District will be responsible to the South Tippah School Board through the Superintendent. All personnel will refer matters requiring administrative action to the immediate supervisor who will refer such matters to the next higher authority when necessary. All personnel will have the right to appeal any decision made by a supervisor through the approved grievance procedures. Within the framework of the South Tippah School District's policy, other school officials will assist the supervisor in charge. All supervisors have the responsibility for communication with those employees under their supervision. Employees will follow the chain of command for any requests, recommendations, or concerns.

COMMUNICATION DEVICES

All communication instruments (pagers, cell phones, beepers) may not be used during school hours except in the case of an emergency. School phones shall be used primarily for instructional purposes and school business.

USE OF CELL TELEPHONES BY TEACHERS

The Board of Trustees of the South Tippah School District believes that the school district was created for the primary purpose of effectively educating the children attending school within the school system. The Board further believes that to accomplish this mission, it is imperative that classroom instructional time be protected. Therefore, any activity that distracts the teacher from his or her ability to utilize the entire class period for instructional purposes is prohibited. Specifically prohibited is the use of cell telephones by teachers during class time.

VIOLATIONS

Alleged violations of this policy shall be discussed in a conference between the employee and the building principal. If the principal finds the violation(s) to be factual, the principal shall issue a written reprimand to the employee(s) involved. This reprimand shall become a part of the employee's personnel file. Repeated violations may result in non-renewal of an employee's contract or dismissal.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

In order to facilitate the growth of each student associated with the South Tippah School District, it is necessary to safeguard the trust that we are given. Therefore, it is essential to the district mission to regard all information that is heard or seen in the course of job performance as confidential information. Only designated personnel within the limits of established South Tippah School District policy may release

information that must be made available to proper authorities. When in doubt about disclosing information immediately refer all inquiries to your supervisor.

Confidential information is defined as information regarding students, fellow employees, and all internal relationships. This includes information electronically transmitted or any data on computer disks, electronic mail or the like. Failure to maintain confidentiality is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

An employee of the South Tippah School District shall not engage in selling goods or services to the South Tippah School Board and shall not engage in or have a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with duties and responsibilities in the school system. No staff member shall engage in any type of private business during school time or on school property.

Employees shall not engage in work of any type where the source of information concerning customer, client, or employer originates from any information obtained through the school system.

No gifts from any person or group desiring or doing business with the school system shall be accepted by a school employee except for normally valued instructional products or advertising items that are widely distributed.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

The South Tippah School District's desire is to provide a drug free, healthful and safe workplace for all employees and a learning environment for all students. To promote this goal, employees are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner.

While on district premises and while conducting business-related activities off district premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace.

Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment, and/or required participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation treatment program. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

Employees with questions on this policy or issues related to drug or alcohol use in the workplace should direct inquiries to the immediate supervisor or refer to the South Tippah School Board Policy Manual for the complete policy.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

District employees are hereby notified that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance, except as authorized by law from the prescription of a physician, in workplaces of this school district are prohibited. School officials will cooperate fully with law enforcement in prosecution of drug violations occurring in the workplace.

Violators will be subject to suspension or dismissal. Suspension or dismissal may result in the suspension or revocation of the license of a licensed employee. (§37-3-2)

The South Tippah School District is committed to providing a safe, efficient, and productive work environment for all employees. Using or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on the job may pose serious safety and health risks. Copies of the employee drug testing policy are available at the South Tippah website to all employees and will be available on request from the District Administrative Office during normal business hours. Employees will be asked to sign an acknowledgment form indicating that a copy of the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, Memorandum has been received. Employees are encouraged to read and review the full text of the policy.

EMPLOYEE ATTIRE GUIDELINES

Research indicates that the way a person dresses influences the way others perceive that person. Employees of the South Tippah School District, should strive to serve as positive role models for students and project the best possible image of the position.

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the image that the South Tippah School District presents to the community. The district acknowledges and celebrates individuality, but the district also recognizes that dress, grooming and personal cleanliness directly affect the educational atmosphere of the school district, whether it is in the classroom or not.

During school hours, business hours or when representing the South Tippah School District, employees are expected to present a clean, neat, and tasteful appearance. Employees should dress and groom themselves according to the requirements of the position and accepted community standards.

The building administrator or department head is responsible for establishing a reasonable dress code appropriate to the job. Consult the supervisor if there are questions as to what constitutes appropriate appearance. Where necessary, reasonable accommodations may be made for a person with a disability.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WORK RULES

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, the South Tippah School District expects employees to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all employees and the organization.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of infractions of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment:

- * Negligence towards or endangerment of students
- * Negligent or intentional damage to school property or equipment
- * Violation of law or school policy
- * Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property
- * Falsification of timekeeping records
- * Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- * Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating school-owned vehicles or equipment
- * Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- * Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct
- * Violation of safety or health rules
- * Smoking/tobacco use in all areas, including South Tippah School vehicles is prohibited
- * Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- * Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace or on the premises
- * Excessive absenteeism or/and absence without notice
- * Unauthorized absence from work station during the workday
- * Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, or other employer-owned equipment
- * Failure to maintain classroom discipline or an appropriate educational environment
- * Violation of personnel policies
- * Violation of School Board policies
- * Unsatisfactory performance or conduct
- * Being excessively tardy or late for work

Licensed employees are subject to the provisions of the School Employment Procedures Law and further can be suspended or terminated for specific, statutorily enumerated infractions and other good causes. For

non-licensed employees, employment with the South Tippah School District is at the mutual consent of the district and the employee, and either party may terminate that relationship at any time, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice.

EMPLOYEE LEGAL NAME REQUIRMENT

All documents of the South Tippah School District will reflect an employee's legal name that is identified by the first, middle initial, and last name. All name changes must be provided and verified with supporting documents to the District Administrative Office.

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS

The South Tippah School District relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in the exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

FACULTY MEETINGS

Faculty meetings are official and vital school events. The authority to call a faculty meeting lies with the building Principal and/or the superintendent. All teachers and other instructional personnel are expected to attend all faculty meetings called unless excused by the person calling the meeting prior to the time of that meeting. Meetings will be scheduled in advance to avoid conflict with schedules except in the case of extreme emergency.

GOALS

It is the responsibility of each employee to work diligently in helping their immediate supervisor reach the individual school goals and the overall goals that have been adopted by the district.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Every employee will be treated with dignity and fairness, and it is the belief of the South Tippah School District Board of Trustees that most conflicts and misunderstandings can be mediated with open communication, discussion, and compromise. However, when a resolution cannot be reached, then the staff member may proceed to affect a resolution in accordance with the South Tippah School District Board Policies.

All parties will hold grievance proceedings in strict confidence at all levels involved.

LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Faculty and staff who leave the school campus for any reason during the day must report to his or her immediate supervisor the time he or she will be leaving and the reason for the departure. If one returns prior to the end of the school day, he or she should report to the school office before returning to the work assignment.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Licensed Employees: The Mississippi Department of Education has developed an assessment instrument for licensed employees designed to review, analyze and improve the educational and/or administrative skills of each licensed employee. The assessments also are useful in making job assignments and may be used in contract renewal decisions. Job performance observations may be made on a daily or weekly basis, but the assessment provides a structured method of evaluation with the opportunity of each employee to review and respond. The assessment is conducted annually.

Non-licensed Employees: Supervisors and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, day-to-day basis. Additional formal evaluations may be conducted to provide both supervisors and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals.

POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT STATEMENT

The Board of Trustees of South Tippah School District recognizes and encourages the rights of its employees, as citizens, to engage in political activity, with the following restrictions:

1. No employee shall solicit support for any political candidate, partisan or nonpartisan, during regular work hours or on school property.
2. No employee shall solicit support of any issue on any referendum matter during regular work hours or on school property.

PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENT

The superintendent of the South Tippah School District shall make assignments of all licensed employees within the limitations of regulations of the Office of Educator Licensure. The superintendent may make reassignments of such employees from time to time to any area in which said employee has a valid license issued.

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT

The building principal is responsible for providing accurate and timely information to all educational staff, students, and citizens of the community regarding efforts by the school to provide each student with the best possible education and preparation.

The superintendent, with the help of the principals and other supervisory staff, is responsible for providing accurate and timely information to all educational staff, students, and citizens of the community regarding the efforts of the district to improve the quality of education provided each student.

RETURN OF PROPERTY

Employees are responsible for items issued to them by the South Tippah School District or in their possession or control, such as the following:

- Books and educational materials
- Official grade books and student work needed for grades
- Equipment
- Identification or security badges
- Keys
- Manual
- Protective equipment
- Tools
- Uniforms
- Vehicles
- Written materials

The employee must return all South Tippah School District property on or before the last day of work. Failure to return promptly any property in the employee's possession will result in action to recover the property by any legal means.

SAFETY

To assist in providing a safe and healthful work environment for employees, students, and visitors, the South Tippah School District has established a crisis management plan. This program is a top priority for the district. The building administrator or supervisor has responsibility for implementing, administering, monitoring, and evaluating the safety program. Its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.

The South Tippah School District provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as staff or faculty meetings, bulletin board postings, memos, or other written communications.

Some of the best safety improvement ideas come from employees. Those with ideas, concerns, or suggestions for improved safety in the workplace are encouraged to bring them to the attention of the building administrator or supervisor.

Reports and concerns about workplace safety issues may be made anonymously if the employee wishes. All reports can be made without fear of reprisal, but must be accurately and appropriately documented.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report or, where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees should **IMMEDIATELY** notify the building administrator or supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance and Workers' Compensation benefits' procedures.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND OTHER HARASSMENTS

The South Tippah School District is committed to providing a work and school environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition includes many forms of offensive behavior and includes gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser. The following is a partial list of sexual harassment examples:

- *Unwanted sexual advances
- *Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors
- *Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances
- * Visual conduct that includes leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons or posters
- *Verbal conduct that includes making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, or jokes
- *Verbal sexual advances or propositions
- * Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, or suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations
- *Physical conducts that includes touching, assaulting, or impeding or blocking movements
- * Unwelcome sexual advances (either verbal or physical), requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:
 - (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
 - (2) submission or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for making employment decisions; or,

(3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Sexual harassment can occur between employees, between students or between an employee and a student. It is each employee's responsibility to recognize and report any type of sexual harassment.

If sexual or other unlawful harassment in the work place is experienced or witnessed, report it immediately to the supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or it is believed it would be uncomfortable or inappropriate to contact that person, immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator or any administrator in the District Administrative Office. It is important that the harassment be reported. Concerns can be raised and reports can be made without fear of reprisal or retaliation. All allegations of sexual harassment will be quickly and discreetly investigated. To the extent possible, confidentiality and identity of any witnesses and the alleged harasser will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. When the investigation is completed, the person making the report will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Any supervisor or employee who becomes aware of possible sexual or other harassment must immediately advise the current Title IX Coordinator, an immediate supervisor, or any administrator in the District Administrative Offices so that it can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner. Anyone who is determined to have engaged in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination (employees), suspension, or expulsion (students).

SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

In keeping with the South Tippah School District's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, smoking and all other tobacco use are prohibited throughout all school and district workplaces. This policy applies equally to all employees, students, suppliers, and visitors.

SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

BOARD POLICY CODE: GABBA

South Tippah School District (STSD) employees are required to exhibit ethical and professional behavior at all times. Ethical and professional behavior requires that STSD employees show consideration and respect whenever using computers or electronic communication/devices/resources. South Tippah School District employees shall not:

- a. Communicate with other employees, students, and/or parent/guardians, with comments or content what would not be acceptable in a face-to-face communication;
- b. Engage in conduct and/or make comments, whether on duty or off duty, that disrupts the school environment, that impedes the employee's ability to perform his or her duties, or that reflect poorly on his/her character or the character of others;
- c. Disclose, use, or disseminate a student's educational information or another employee's privileged information;
- d. Use telephone calls, e-mail, text messages, twitter, social networking web site, or any other electronic communication to communicate with students, except

- regarding school matters;
- e. Post on any sites, including social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace or any similar site, any data, documentation, photos or information which reflects poorly on his/her character of others, that might interfere with the employee's ability to perform his/her duties or that might result in a disruption of classroom activity and/or the educational environment. This discrimination will be made by the Superintendent and/or his designee;
 - f. Invite or accept current STSD students into any personal social networking sites.

STAFF PROTECTION STATEMENT

No parent, guardian or other person shall insult or abuse an employee while school is in session or in the presence of students, under penalty of law §37-11-21. The Board of Trustees of the South Tippah School District recognizes that from time to time it may be necessary to prefer legal charges against students or non-students in violations that occur at school or at school related activities. Any intimidation or threat toward an employee or student by any student or outside interest will not be tolerated. Such offenses will be dealt with immediately in the most severe manner.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS STATEMENT

Universal precautions are work practices that help prevent contact with blood and certain other body fluids. Universal precautions are a person's best protection against AIDS, hepatitis B and other infectious diseases. To help prevent the spread of diseases communicated by body secretions, the following is recommended:

- Wear disposable plastic or rubber gloves when in contact with body secretions and do not reuse disposable gloves.
- Wash hands after contact with children. Use disposable paper towels. Encourage children to wash their hands after bathroom use or if they have other body substances on their hands.
- To clean up body fluids, always use an approved disinfectant. Clean the work surface any time it is contaminated with blood or other body fluids, and when work is completed.
- Do not eat or drink in work areas where blood or other body fluids may be present. Do not handle contact lenses or apply lip balm/cosmetics in these areas.
- Most importantly, ask questions for understanding, and always follow safety procedures.

*Procedures at each work site should be followed.

VISITATION AT SCHOOL DISTRICT FACILITIES

The South Tippah School District welcomes parents and citizens to district facilities to observe students, teachers and other staff members, but to insure the safety of students and employees the following guidelines must be enforced:

All visitors/guests will report to the site office when entering a building to receive authorization to visit the school campus. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to the destination. Employees are responsible for the conduct and safety of the invited guests.

Staff members who wish to invite speakers/guests to the classroom must get prior approval from the principal.

Parents or citizens who wish to observe a classroom will make advance arrangements with the teacher and principal of the school.

To provide for the safety and security of students and employees and the facilities in the South Tippah School District, only authorized visitors are allowed in the workplace. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps maintain safety standards, protects against theft, ensures security of equipment, protects confidential information, safeguards employee welfare, and avoids potential distractions and disturbances.

If an unauthorized individual is observed on the South Tippah School District's premises, employees should immediately notify the supervisor, or if necessary, direct the individual to the administrative offices of each school facility.

DISTRICT RESOURCES, SERVICES AND PROCEDURES

COMPUTER AND E-MAIL USAGE

Computers, computer files, the e-mail system, and software furnished to employees are the property of the South Tippah School District and are intended for school business use. Employees should not use a password, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication without authorization. To ensure compliance with this policy, computer and e-mail usage may be monitored.

The South Tippah School District strives to maintain a workplace free of harassment and sensitive to the diversity of its employees. Therefore, the district prohibits the use of computers and the e-mail system in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale.

For example, the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, and cartoons is not allowed. Other such misuse includes, but is not limited to, ethnic slurs, racial comments, off-color jokes, or anything that may be construed as harassment or showing disrespect for others. E-mail may not be used to solicit others for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-school business matters.

The South Tippah School District purchases and licenses the use of computer software for business purposes and does not own the copyright to this software or its related documentation. Unless authorized by the software developer, the district does not have the right to reproduce such software for use on more than one computer.

Employees may only use software on local area networks or on multiple machines according to the software license agreement. The South Tippah School District prohibits the illegal duplication of software and its related documentation.

Employees should notify the immediate supervisor, the school district computer systems' coordinator, or any school administrator upon learning of violations of this policy. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

INTERNET USAGE

Internet access to global electronic information resources on the World Wide Web is provided by the South Tippah School District to assist employees in obtaining work-related data and technology. The following guidelines have been established to help ensure responsible and productive Internet usage.

While Internet usage is intended for school research and job-related activities, personal use may be permitted with prior authorization.

All Internet data that is composed, transmitted, or received, via the computer communications' system is considered to be part of the official records of the South Tippah School District, and as such, is subject to disclosure to law enforcement or other third parties. Consequently, employees should always ensure that the information contained in Internet e-mail messages and other transmissions are accurate, appropriate, ethical, and lawful.

The equipment, services, and technology provided to access the Internet remain at all times the property of the South Tippah School District. As such, the district reserves the right to monitor Internet traffic, and retrieve and read any data composed, sent, or received through the online connections and stored in the computer systems.

Data that is composed, transmitted, accessed, or received via the Internet must not contain content that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, obscene, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or disruptive to any employee or other person. Examples of unacceptable content may include, but are not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comments or images that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

The unauthorized use, installation, copying, or distribution of copyrighted, trademarked, or patented material on the Internet is expressly prohibited. As a general rule, if an employee did not create material, does not own the rights to it, or has not gotten authorization for its use, it should not be put on the Internet. Employees are also responsible for ensuring that the person sending any material over the Internet has the appropriate distribution rights.

Internet users should take the necessary anti-virus precautions before downloading or copying any file from the Internet. All downloaded files are to be checked for viruses; all compressed files are to be checked before and after decompression.

Abuse of the Internet access provided by the South Tippah School District in violation of law or district policies will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees may also be held personally liable for any violations of this policy. The following behaviors are examples of previously stated or additional actions and activities that are prohibited and can result in disciplinary action:

- Sending or posting confidential student or personnel information
- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images
- Using the organization's time and resources for personal gain
- Stealing, using, or disclosing someone else's code or password without authorization
- Copying, pirating, or downloading software and electronic files without permission
- Violating copyright laws
- Failing to observe licensing agreements
- Participating in the viewing or exchange of pornography or obscene materials
- Sending or posting messages that defame or slander other individuals
- Attempting to break into the computer system of another organization or person

- Sending anonymous e-mail messages
- Engaging in any other illegal activities

PURCHASING

The Board of Trustees of the South Tippah School District authorizes the superintendent or designee to purchase and supervise the purchasing of all supply items, repair parts, vendor performed services, and items of furniture and equipment, in accordance with state law and good purchasing practices.

Below please find the steps that must be followed when making a purchase involving district funds.

1. The employee completes a requisition form with the following information:
 - a. Employee's name and school shipping address
 - b. Vendor's name and mailing address, phone and/or fax numbers
 - c. Item information including quantity, stock number, description of item, and price
2. The employee should give the completed requisition form to the building principal or immediate supervisor for approval and processing.

RESIGNATION

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment with the South Tippah School District. Although advance notice is not required, the district requests at least two (2) weeks' written resignation notice from all employees. Prior to an employee's departure, it is the employee's responsibility to schedule a time to discuss reasons for resignation and the effect of the resignation on their benefits.

USE OF EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES

Equipment and vehicles essential in accomplishing job duties are expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Please notify the supervisor if any equipment, machines, tools, or vehicles appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or others. The supervisor can answer any questions about an employee's responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment or vehicles used on the job.

School vehicles are to be used for school business only.

CONSERVATION OF ENERGY

All employees will be responsible for making every effort to conserve energy and natural resources. The district will maintain accurate records of energy consumption and energy costs and will provide local media with the progress of energy conservation upon their request.

**SOUTH TIPPAH SCHOOL DISTRICT
PERSONNEL GUIDEBOOK
SIGNATURE PAGE**

I have received a copy of the South Tippah School District Personnel Guidebook and understand it is my responsibility to read and follow all school board policy, the Mississippi Code of Ethics, and all other guidelines established in this guidebook.

Employee Signature

Date