COMPLAINT POLICY/LINE AND STAFF RELATIONS

Section I: LINE AND STAFF ADMINISTRATION

A complaint is a claim by a full-time employee that there has been an action that has unjustly caused a loss of some tangible employment benefit or has imposed an unjustified burden as a result of a misinterpretation or misapplication of Section G of the Jackson Public School District’s Policy Handbook. Written or verbal reprimands with no loss of pay or compensation shall not be the subject of a complaint under this policy. A complaint may also arise as a result of suspension or dismissal of a full-time employee. However, dismissal, suspension, or non-renewal of certificated employees shall be governed by the applicable provisions of the Mississippi Code rather than this complaint policy.

This complaint procedure shall not apply to any matter, which is prescribed by state or federal law and/or regulations, or to any matter over which the board is without power to act, including, but not limited to, the reinstatement of classified employees after such employee has been terminated by the superintendent. The administration of the district is that of line and staff. Employees shall conduct their affairs with their administrators according to this organizational arrangement. The board of trustees is the policymaker for the school district, and the superintendent, as the board’s chief executive officer, is charged with the general operation of the entire school district. The superintendent is responsible to the board of trustees and all other employees are responsible to the superintendent and to the board through the superintendent.

All employees shall refer matters requiring administrative action to their immediate supervisor who shall refer such matters to the next higher authority when necessary. Within individual schools, the principal’s administrative organization is the established authority. While employees will report to the designated administrator on specific problems, the principal remains the final authority at the individual school level.

In those circumstances involving sexual harassment by a supervisor, or other complaint of a sensitive nature, the employee may proceed to the next supervisor in line, the executive director of human resources, or the Title IX coordinator for sexual harassment complaints.

In the event a satisfactory answer or resolution is not given by the immediate supervisor, then the employee shall report to the next level of supervision in accordance with the steps outlined in the complaint procedures. All employees shall have the right to appeal any decision made by their supervisor through applicable procedures. All concerns raised in accordance with this complaint policy will receive final consideration from the superintendent or his designees. Except for those certified employees whose employment is governed by the Education Employment Procedures Law as set forth in Miss. Code Ann. §37-9-
101 et. seq., once an employee is dismissed or suspended by the superintendent, the board of trustees has no legal authority to re-hire or reverse the suspension of that employee absent a recommendation from the superintendent to do so.

Within the broad framework of board policy, other school officials shall assist the supervisor in charge as assigned. All supervisors have the responsibility for communication with those under their supervision.

This policy does not modify the at-will status of administrative or non-administrative classified employees.

The superintendent may develop administrative regulations that are additional to those outlined in Section II, Employee Conduct and Code of Ethics, of this policy regarding standards of conduct for staff members.

Section II: EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND CODE OF ETHICS

An employee of the Jackson Public School District 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 employees. The employee acknowledges that the schools belong to the public they serve and exist to provide educational opportunity to all children.

The effective operation of the school district requires the services of employees with integrity and human understanding. To maintain and promote these essential traits, all employees of the Jackson Public School District are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships. School district employees shall not use or attempt to use their official positions to secure any valuable thing or benefit for themselves that would not ordinarily accrue to them in the performance of their official duties, if such thing or benefit would represent a substantial and improper influence upon them with respect to their duties.

Employee standards include the following:

1. Maintenance of just and courteous professional relationships with pupils, parents, staff members, and others.

2. Maintenance and improvement of their own efficiency and knowledge of developments in their fields of work through research and continuing professional development.

3. Transaction of all official business with the properly designated authorities of the school system.
4. Placement of the welfare of children as the first and fundamental concern of the school system in all actions and decisions; thus appointments to positions and promotion must be based solely on merit. The use of pressure on school officials for appointment or promotion is unethical.

5. Restraint from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views, or selfish propaganda of any kind. Employees should avoid using their positions for personal gain through political, social, religious, economic, or other influence. All responsibilities will be fulfilled with honesty and integrity.

6. Directing any criticism of other staff member or of any department of the school system toward the improvement of the school system. Such constructive criticism is to be made directly to the particular school administrator who has the administrative responsibility for improving the situation and then to the superintendent, if necessary.

7. Proper use and protection of all school properties, equipment, and materials.

8. Proper care and use of confidential information and student records.


10. Honor all contracts until fulfillment or release.

11. Obey local, state, and federal laws and regulations in the performance of their job duties.

12. Implement policies of the board of trustees and the administrative rules and regulations of the school district.

13. Adhere to the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct as adopted by the Mississippi Department of Education.

No employee, in the course of his/her duties, who has access to or possesses information relating to his/her employment, shall disclose, divulge or otherwise compromise, except as authorized by the superintendent and/or board of trustees, the district's strategy on matters in negotiation, work product and planning for complaint hearings and litigation relating to employer-employee relations, office memoranda, or other matters relating to employer-employee relations the premature disclosure of which would jeopardize the district's negotiating position or planning for complaint hearings and litigation. Confidential information will not include matters disclosed to the general public by the board of trustees, or designees, or matters of non-exempt public records as defined by state law.
Employees shall not record, or cause to be recorded, with an audio or videotaping device, other employees without their knowledge, permission, or consent. However, audio or videotaping of classrooms for observation and evaluative purposes is permissible for use by school personnel only.

Employees are expected to participate, in a truthful manner, in any district investigation and share any information with the appropriate parties that may be relevant to the investigation unless the participation is against the employee’s criminal interest.

The district recognizes the obligation of all employees of the school district to be conscious of their professional responsibility not to divulge information presented by a student, parent, a colleague, or an agency when that revelation is not in the best interest of the district. The district recognizes that within a human services organization as complex as a school district, it is necessary to share information on a “need to know” basis. However, the sharing of information should only serve to assist, rectify, or resolve a situation and should never be downgraded to idle gossip or negative commentary to the media, or others within the community.

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