Employee Handbook
2015-2016

“Every Child, Every Day”
Preface

The explanations contained in this booklet are intended to provide information relating to our school system, including benefits. Most information provided for benefits is in summary form only. The policies set forth in this employee handbook are merely guidelines for the employee and are provided for informational purposes only. This employee handbook in whole or in part does not create a written employment contract and does not modify the nature of your employment.

More detailed information may be found in the Policy Manual on the Amherst County Public Schools website (www.amherst.k12.va.us) or by calling the School Administration Offices at (434) 946-9376.

July 13, 2015
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ACPS SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

**Member At-Large, Chairman**
Alan J. Wood  
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434-528-6499 x18001  
297 Berg Drive, Madison Heights, VA 24572  
Date Appointed: 2012-07-01  
Term Expires: 2016-06-30

**District 1, Vice Chairman**
Mike Henderson  
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Term Expires: 2019-06-30

**District 3**
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Term Expires: 2019-06-30

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Term Expires: 2016-06-30

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**Superintendent**  
Dr. Steven Nichols  
[snichols@amherst.k12.va.us](mailto:snichols@amherst.k12.va.us)  
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ACPS ADMINISTRATION

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**Supervisor of School Counseling and Assessment Coordinator**
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**Supervisor of Humanities**
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Student Accountability Coordinator
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Student Accountability Coordinator
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ACPS PRINCIPALS

**Amherst High School**
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Amy Snead, Assistant Principal  
Chris Young, Assistant Principal  
Craig Maddox, Assistant Principal  
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**Amherst Middle School**
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Derrick Brown, Assistant Principal  
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Lantz Martin, Assistant Principal  
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**Amelon Elementary School**
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**Central Elementary School**
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**Elon Elementary School**
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Wanda Smith, Assistant Principal  
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**Pleasant View Elementary School**
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**Temperance Elementary School**
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**Amherst Education Center**
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The following will serve as our procedures for addressing inclement weather days for the 2015-2016 school year. As in the past, we will notify radio and TV stations of our decision to close schools, or open late, as early in the morning as possible. Once the decision to close schools for the day has been made, we will not reverse our decision. However, in unusual situations, it may be necessary to change a late opening decision to a closed status. Therefore, you must stay tuned to your stations for complete and accurate information.

**CLOSINGS:**
In the event of a school-closed decision, the announcement will be made in one of two manners.

**Either**

a) Amherst County Public Schools are closed

or

b) Amherst County Public Schools and administrative offices are closed.

This distinction is very important. I will address each separately.

a) **Code One: Amherst County Public Schools are closed** - means that students are not to report that day. However, 12-month employees and 11-month administrative employees should report for work as usual or as soon as they can. Teachers and teacher assistants need not report. If an employee who is expected to work on inclement days does not report to work that day, he/she will turn in a leave form for either personal leave or annual leave. If the employee does not have annual or personal leave balances, then he/she will have a full pay deduction for that day.

(Child Nutrition workers, bus drivers and bus aides only report to work on those days that students report. Anytime schools are closed due to inclement weather for students, it is also closed for these groups of employees.)

b) **Code Two: No longer in effect**

c) **Code Three: Amherst County Public Schools & Administrative Offices are closed. Principals and supervisors will contact emergency employees to discuss reporting.** When this announcement is made no one should report, including emergency employees. **Principals and supervisors will contact emergency employees** to discuss reasonable time frames for returning to the sites. If you are unsure as to whether or not you should report to work, contact your supervisor before setting out or call the Central Office info line at 946-9386 and after the voice mail system answers, press 7. If you are requested to come in and are able to do so when all other emergency employees have been excused for the day, then you will be compensated at the overtime pay rate for a minimum of
four hours and you will receive a half day of annual leave for 4 hours and an entire day of annual leave for 7.5 hours.

Principals and supervisors will receive a form to complete documentation for those employees who work on code 3 days.

**DELAYED OPENINGS:**

When a delayed opening is announced, all employees should make every effort to arrive at work as soon as they are reasonably able to do so. For a delayed opening staff should report within two (2) hours later than their normal reporting time. Emergency employees (i.e., maintenance, mechanics, grounds, custodial), and other staff designated by principals, are to report at their normal time, or earlier, in order to assist with situations created by the inclement weather and delayed start of school.

If you have any questions regarding the interpretation of these guidelines for 2015-2016, please talk with your principal or supervisor first. If you are unable to resolve your questions, please ask your principal to contact me.

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**Regulations Regarding Emergency Employees During Inclement Weather**

School closings will be announced in one of three manners:

**Employee Code 1:** Amherst County Public Schools are closed. This signifies that schools are closed and that all administrators and 12-month employees should report.

**Teachers, teacher assistants, bus drivers, bus assistants and child nutrition staff members do not report when schools are closed.**

**Employee Code 2:** No longer in effect

**Emergency Code 3:** Amherst County Public Schools and Administrative Offices are closed. Principals and Supervisors will contact emergency employees to discuss reporting.

In the case of this designation, no one is expected to report to work due to the extreme weather conditions. However, supervisors will be in contact with emergency employees by phone to discuss establishment of work schedules. Emergency employees shall provide supervisors with the phone number where they can be reached and will also be provided the number of their supervisor.

**During a Code 1 situation:**

When employees who are expected to work do not report, annual or personal leave must be taken. In the event the employee has no annual or personal leave, his/her pay will be reduced by the daily rate.
During a Code 2 situation:
No longer in effect

During a Code 3 situation:
Emergency employees, who are expected to work and are able to do so, will be compensated at the overtime rate for a minimum of four hours and will receive a half day of annual leave for 4 hours and an entire day of annual leave for 7.5 hours.

DELAYED OPENINGS:
If a delayed opening is announced, staff should report:

Two hours late - within two hours of their regular reporting time. If there is a problem, contact your principal/supervisor.

AMHERST COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2015-2016

School Closing Information Will Be Announced on the Following Radio / TV Stations:

WJJS/WJJX  WSLQ
WFIR     WROV
WAMV     WREL
WXLK - K92 WSLS Channel 10
WBRG     WFXR - Fox 21 - Fox 27
WVTF 89  WDBJ Channel 7
WYYD     WSET
WRXT (Spirit FM 103.7) WZZU
WZZU
WLNI     WSLC
WLEQ FM 97.9
WVBE

Info Line - 946-9386, after the voice mail system answers, press 7.
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Amherst County Public Schools Board of Education is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, disability or national origin. The school system is committed to providing a workplace which reflects the racial, gender and cultural diversity of our county and the children we serve. We are dedicated to equality of opportunity. The school system will make reasonable accommodations upon request to enable any employee with a disability to perform essential job functions. Refer to Policy GB.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Board of Education believes that all employees and students are entitled to work and study in environments that are free of sexual harassment. To this end, the Board prohibits employees, volunteers, student teachers and students from engaging in sexual harassment and advises employees and students, that when evidence of sexual harassment is established, disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including dismissal (for employees) and suspension (for students).

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, deliberate, unwelcome touching; suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises or threats; pressure for sexual activity; continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions; continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual’s body; sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual; or the display in the workplace or school setting of sexually suggestive objects or pictures. Sexual harassment does not include personal compliments welcomed by the recipient or social interactions or relations freely entered into by an employee or prospective employee or appropriate social interactions between students that do not violate the Code of Student Conduct.

It is possible for sexual harassment to occur at various levels: between peers or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, between students or imposed by non-employees on employees and/or students.

Romantic or sexual advances toward students by employees or romantic or sexual relationships between school system employees and students are never appropriate, whether they are consensual or non-consensual or otherwise outside the definition of sexual harassment. Such relationships are prohibited. Employees engaging in inappropriate relationships with students, or who fail to report such relationships to the Superintendent, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
Any employee who has knowledge of conduct or circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment must report such to the principal, designee or supervisor. All complaints of sexual harassment shall be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Any employee who receives from a student a report (oral or written) of alleged sexual harassment shall immediately report the same to the school principal, and the principal shall promptly inform the Superintendent of the allegations. Failure by the employee to do so may subject the employee to disciplinary action.

Any employee who believes that he/she has suffered harassment may report the matter in writing to the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Department. Refer to Policies GBA/JFMA.

**PROHIBITED RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS**

All employees, volunteers and student teachers of Amherst County Public Schools System are prohibited from entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with any student while enrolled in Amherst County Public Schools, regardless of the student’s age and regardless of whether the involvement is consensual. Employees engaging in such inappropriate conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Any employee who has reason to believe that another employee is inappropriately involved with a student as described above, shall report this information to the Human Resources Department. Any employee who fails to inform the Compliance Officer/Assistant Superintendent, of a reported or suspected inappropriate relationship between an employee and a student may be subject to disciplinary action.

**CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK**

The Amherst County Public Schools School Board believes that a safe and secure learning and working environment should be provided for all students and staff. The Board further believes that employees should be role models for students and should positively represent Amherst County Public Schools in their community. These beliefs reflect the fundamental principle that anyone who directly or indirectly has contact with children is in a unique position of trust in this society. Criminal dispositions against an applicant or employee may have an impact upon these goals and will be considered in hiring and dismissal decisions.

All applicants must consent to criminal record checks as a condition of consideration for employment. Such consent shall include consent for criminal record checks that may take place after employment. Criminal record checks
will be conducted on all newly hired employees, including substitutes and student teachers. All new employees will be hired conditional upon the review of the individual’s criminal record, and the employee shall be considered a conditional employee until final approval.

**SELF-REPORTING CHARGE/ARREST CONVICTION**

The Board of Education of Amherst County insists upon maintaining a safe environment for its students and employees. Because employees occasionally are subject to criminal sanctions for both on and off duty as a result of violating local, state and/or federal laws, Amherst County Public Schools must be informed of all such charges, arrests, and convictions in order to assess each individual situation and maintain safety for all parties involved. It is, therefore, mandatory that each employee self-reports all charges, arrests, and convictions.

An employee, whether full-time or part-time, probationary or non-probationary, or employed in a temporary or seasonal capacity (i.e. substitute teacher, substitute custodian, emergency coach), shall report the following charges, arrests, or convictions to the Human Resources Office within 24 hours, absent extraordinary and compelling circumstances as determined in the sole, exclusive, and reasonable discretion of the Human Resources Office.

a. Charges, arrests, and convictions (or the equivalent in any jurisdiction) to be reported:
   1. Crimes against person(s) which puts a person(s) at risk
   2. Crimes of a sexual nature
   3. Crimes involving weapons
   4. Crimes involving drugs
   5. Crimes against property
   6. Crimes involving religious and ethnic matters (hate crimes)
   7. Crimes involving money/fiscal matters
   8. Crimes involving animal cruelty
   9. Crimes contributing to the delinquency of a minor

b. Criminal Traffic Violations to be reported:
   1. Driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI)
   2. Driving while impaired by alcohol (DWI)
   3. Driving while impaired by alcohol and drugs
   4. Driving while impaired by controlled substances
   5. Driving with a suspended/revoked license
   6. Driving uninsured
   7. Driving while not licensed
   8. Leaving the scene of an accident (hit and run)
9. Reckless driving  
10. Negligent driving  
11. Fraudulent use of a license  
12. Failure to remain at the scene of an accident involving bodily injury  
13. Failure of driver to stop after unattended vehicle damage  
14. Manslaughter by automobile  
15. Fleeing from or attempting to elude police officers

**DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**

It is the policy of the Amherst County Public Schools Board of Education that a drug-free workplace shall be maintained. The Board prohibits the unlawful manufacture, transmission, conspiring to transmit, possession, use or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, anabolic steroid, counterfeit drug, alcohol, other intoxicants of any kind or any other controlled substance. The Board prohibits the possession, use, transmission, or conspiring to transmit drug paraphernalia. In addition, no employee shall be impaired by the excessive use of prescription or nonprescription drugs. Employees must not operate equipment while taking prescription drugs that impair/limit their ability to do so.

**DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING ALL EMPLOYEES**

As an employer, Amherst County Public Schools is committed to provide, within its means, a healthy and safe environment and the best possible services to the students. The administration is also committed to maintaining the public’s confidence in its employees and to protecting the school system from the economic losses that can occur because of alcohol and drug abuse.

The purpose of drug and alcohol testing is to promote and maintain a drug-free environment in the workplace and to protect employees, students and the public by ensuring that employees of the Board are physically and mentally fit to perform their assigned duties. Employees are expected and required to perform their duties safely and effectively throughout the workday. When there are reasonable grounds to believe that an employee is in violation of the Board’s Drug-Free Workplace Policy, the Superintendent may require that the employee be referred to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and may be required to submit to a medical examination including drug or alcohol assessment.
USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS/ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

The Board of Education recognizes that the use of tobacco products is a health, safety and environmental hazard for students, employees, visitors and school facilities. The Board also acknowledges that adult employees serve as role models for students and the Board’s acceptance of any use of tobacco products implies school approval, if not endorsement, of such use. In addition, the Board recognizes that it has an obligation to promote a healthy learning and working environment, free from unwanted smoke, for the students, employees and visitors in the school system.

No employee or visitor shall be permitted under any circumstances to use tobacco products and/or electronic cigarettes in or on the ground of any facility owned or leased or contracted for the Amherst County Public Schools.

For the purposes of this policy, tobacco product is defined to include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, and any other items containing or reasonably resembling tobacco or tobacco products. Tobacco use includes smoking, chewing, dipping, or any other use of tobacco products. Refer to Policy GBEC.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE BY EMPLOYEES

The Amherst County Public Schools’ computer resources are intended to be used for business purposes only. These computer resources are not to be considered a substitute for an employee’s personal home computer and/or Internet connection. All electronic data files stored or transmitted on Amherst County Public Schools’ computer resources are considered Amherst County Public Schools’ records. As a condition of initial and continued employment, all employees shall sign a statement indicating that they understand and will strictly comply with this Acceptable Use Policy. Refer to Policy GAB/IIBEA.

WEAPONS ON CAMPUS

The Board of Education practices zero tolerance with respect to weapons on school property. Any person who in violation of state law brings a firearm or other weapons onto school property, possesses a weapon on school property, or encourages or enables another to bring any weapon on school property will be reported to law enforcement authorities. Possession of a concealed handgun permit does not authorize the holder to carry a weapon on school property. For the purposes of this policy, school property includes any public school
building, bus, public school campus, grounds, recreational area or athletic field.

**COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY**

It is the responsibility of all employees to familiarize themselves with the printed policies of the Board. Employees will be held accountable for compliance with those policies and will be apprised of any revisions by the supervisor.

**EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONALISM/CONFIDENTIALITY**

Employees may have access to confidential information – oral, written or computer-generated about other employees, students, or their families.

Staff members agree to the following:

The right to enter or make use of confidential information is restricted to the need to know the data or information to perform job responsibilities. Confidential information will not be discussed in public areas, hallways, gathering spaces, etc. All confidential information will be utilized only for the benefit of the employees or students or in performance of job responsibilities. Violation of the confidentiality clause may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONALISM**

Professional behavior includes following the appropriate chain of command. When employees frequently ignore a “chain of command,” it can affect the overall morale and efficiency of an organization. An established chain of command creates an environment to effectively communicate with others in a fair and appropriate manner. It also establishes a procedure for handling problems directly with the individuals involved. For example, when a teacher communicates a problem to a central office supervisor rather than working directly with the principal to see if the problem can be worked out at the school-based level, a proper chain of command has not been followed. Another example of an inappropriate interaction would be if a custodian contacted the assistant superintendent with a problem, rather than working directly with the supervisor within the school.

It is never appropriate to voice your concerns in a public forum without following a proper channel of professional behavior. When employees treat each other with respect and follow a professional standard for working with each other, everyone benefits.
EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONALISM/SOCIAL NETWORKING

All employees are expected to know and are responsible for observing federal and state laws as well as the School Board’s policies and regulations pertinent to their work activities. Accordingly, employee use of social networking found to be in violation of one or more ACPS policies, regulations or procedures and/or in violation of any applicable state or federal law may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Each employee is responsible for both integrity and the consequences of his or her actions. Each employee must exhibit the highest standards of honesty, integrity and fairness. Employee conduct should be such as to protect the person’s integrity and/or reputation and that of the school system. Employees shall perform their jobs in a competent and ethical manner without violating the public trust or applicable laws, policies and regulations.

EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE

The Amherst County School Board recognizes its employees as highly skilled professionals who have a unique role in the community as they interact with students, parents, and the community at large. Employees have a tremendous opportunity to set the tone and establish an environment that encourages learning and fosters respect for everyone. Employees are role models not only in their words and actions but also in their dress.

The manner and dress of employees shall be business casual. Cleanliness and neatness are expected at all times. Responsibility for acceptable dress rests primarily with the employee; however, administrators and supervisors shall require acceptable dress on the part of all employees. The guidelines are applicable to all full-time and part-time employees as well as substitute employees, student teachers, college interns and aides. Food service, school nurses, maintenance, custodial and transportation personnel are expected to dress according to the guidelines established by their supervisors.

There may be some special circumstances that permit the relaxation of the dress code. Employees shall dress appropriately for the activity of the moment. Some examples include, but are not limited to: physical education teachers when teaching the physical education portion of the curriculum, art or other teachers when working with messy materials, teachers when working in laboratory classes or shops with dangerous equipment or materials, and staff when participating in special events (e.g., field days and field trips).
IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND
NEGLECT/REPORTING INFORMATION TO OUTSIDE
AGENCIES

Every employee of Amherst County Public Schools who, in his professional or
official capacity, has reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected,
in compliance with the Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1509 et seq. shall
immediately report the matter to the local department of social services where
the child resides or where the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred;
to the Virginia Department of Social Services’ toll-free child abuse and neglect
hotline; or to the person in charge of the school or department, or his designee,
who shall make the report forthwith to the local or state agency.

The person making the report to the local or state agency must notify the
person making the initial report when the report of suspected abuse or neglect
is made to the local or state agency, and the name of the individual receiving
the report, and must forward any communication resulting from the report,
including any information about any actions taken regarding the report, to the
person who made the initial report.

All persons required to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect are
immune from civil or criminal liability or administrative penalty or sanction on
account of such reports unless such person has acted in bad faith or with
malicious purpose. The notice shall also include the Virginia Department of
Social Services’ toll-free child abuse, and neglect hotline.
Refer to File: GAE/JHG

MODEL NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA FOR ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and
students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights
with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within
   45 days after the day the [School] receives a request for access.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education
   records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate,
   misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights
   under FERPA.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses
   personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education
records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the [School] to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

   Family Policy Compliance Office  
   U.S. Department of Education  
   400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
   Washington, DC  20202

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students’ education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations.

Refer to File: JO-E

**LICENSE/CERTIFICATION RENEWAL**

The Virginia State Board of Education requires all professional personnel to update professional knowledge periodically. Every professional license is issued with a five-year renewal cycle. Each license holder is responsible for knowing and satisfying license renewal requirements. Failure to renew a license makes an individual ineligible for employment. Renewal credit must be directly related to the licensure areas and/or professional responsibilities.

The policy of the Board is to employ professional personnel who hold or are eligible to hold a clear initial or continuing license in the employment areas. The employee is responsible for obtaining and renewing the appropriate license. In cases where the school system has requested a provisional license, it is the responsibility of the individual to satisfy the provisional requirements of that license within the timeframe established by the Virginia Department of Public Instruction. Employees may contact Human Resource Services for additional information. Refer to Policy GCA.

**CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT RECORDS**

It is the employee’s responsibility to advise Human Resources of name, address, and telephone number changes as well as additional educational degrees. Prompt notification will help maintain accurate employment records for pay, leave, salary verification and other purposes.

**EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL**
All candidates for employment should apply for positions online at www.amherst.k12.va.us. The Superintendent will recommend and the Board will hire candidates for employment based on the following factors:

- Application
- Academic Qualifications
- State licensure
- Record of student teaching experience (where applicable)
- Record of experience, background information, performance, including references
- Personal interviews
- Criminal record check
- Drug screening

Employment in classified positions shall be on a yearly basis. Persons employed in a position requiring State Board of Education license/certification will be given a contract. A probationary term of service of five years in the Amherst County School Division is required before a teacher is issued a continuing contract. Refer to Policy GBN.

**ADVERTISING VACANCIES**

All vacancies occurring during the school year shall be posted on the school system website. A vacancy exists only after the Superintendent has completed lateral reassignments.

**EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES**

The school board may not employ or pay, and the superintendent may not recommend for employment any family member of the superintendent or of a school board member except as authorized by Policy GCCB of the Policy Manual.

**PERSONNEL FILES**

Personnel files are maintained in the Human Resources Department for all personnel who work for Amherst County Public Schools. All complaints, commendations and suggestions for correction or improvement relating to the employee must be placed in their file. The complaint, commendation or suggestion must be signed by the person who made it, and it may be placed in the employee’s file only after a written notice to the employee. Any response by the employee to the complaint, commendation or suggestion must also be placed in his or her file.
Every employee may have access to his/her own personnel file except for pre-employment data, during work hours, provided a 24-hour notice is given to the Human Resources Department.

Any employee wishing to review his/her personnel file should call the Human Resources Office to schedule an appointment.

**CONTINUING CONTRACT STATUS (TENURE)**

Teachers who have attained continuing contract status in a school division of Virginia, and separate from and return to teaching service in the Amherst County Public Schools by the beginning of the third year, are eligible to be recommended for tenure after the successful completion of two years of teaching in the Amherst County Public Schools. Teachers who are new to the profession or who have transferred to the Amherst County Public Schools from out-of-state, are eligible to be recommended for tenure after the successful completion of the fifth consecutive year of teaching with the Amherst County Public Schools.

**EVALUATION OF CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES**

All classified employees are probationary employees for the first eighteen months of their employment. Also, all classified employees are evaluated by their immediate supervisors on an annual basis. Classified evaluations are conducted by using the Amherst County Public Schools’ Annual Evaluation Forms. The forms are designed specifically for the criteria per job description of the various classified positions in the Amherst County Public Schools. The immediate supervisor completes the evaluation annually and shares it with the employee. The employee is asked to sign and has the option to make written comments. A copy of the annual evaluation is given to the employee, and placed in the employee’s file at the school and in the Office of Human Resources.

**EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES**

Administrators and Teachers in the Amherst County Public Schools are evaluated using the Amherst County Public Schools’ Performance Evaluation System. All probationary teachers participate annually in the evaluation program. Also, all continuing contract teachers participate in the supervision program on a rotational cycle; however, the immediate supervisor may deem it necessary for any teacher to participate in the supervision program every year or at any time during the school year. Per Virginia Standards of Accreditation, teachers are required to provide information as follows: high school teachers: a syllabus; middle school and elementary teachers: objectives. Administrators
and teachers are required to write and meet annual student achievement goals
that are used for 40% of the evaluation process.

Counselors, psychologists, nurses, school health assistants, and school
accountability coordinators must write annual objectives which pertain to their
specific assigned areas. Using these objectives and based on performance,
these individuals are evaluated annually by their immediate supervisors.

A copy of the professional evaluations are shared with the employee and filed in
their personnel file in the Office of Human Resources. See evaluation
instruments posted on the website at www.amherst.k12.va.us. Refer to Policy GCN.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Substitutes are contacted through the Aesop, automated sub system, and/or
by the principal or his designee. Only those persons on the list of approved
substitutes may be called for this purpose. Teachers do not make private
arrangements with substitutes for employment and/or payment. A long-term
substitute position is that which is twenty or more consecutive days in length.
In the event that a long-term substitute is needed, the principal should contact
the Office of Human Resources to make arrangements for the long-term
substitute.

STUDENT TEACHERS

Student teachers from area colleges and universities may be assigned to
student teaching practicums in the Amherst County Public Schools.
Assignments are made through the Office of Human Resources. Mentor and
veteran teachers (teachers with more than three consecutive years of
experience in the Amherst County Public Schools) are eligible to serve as
cooperating teachers. Individuals who wish to work as a cooperating teacher
should inform their principals.

REDUCTION IN FORCE

The Board recognizes that circumstances may require the reduction in the
number of persons employed by the school system because of district
reorganization, decreased enrollment or discontinued funding. When
circumstances require such a reduction in the work force, the Board follows
the procedures set forth in Policy GCPA of the Policy Manual.
EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCES

The school system encourages equitable solutions at the most immediate level possible to problems between employees that may arise from time to time. An employee grievance is defined as the formal written claim by an Amherst County Public Schools employee or group of employees that there has been a violation, misapplication or misinterpretation of federal or state law, or regulation, or Amherst County Public Schools’ policies. The grievance must be filed with the immediate supervisor. The complete grievance procedure is fully described in Policy GBM/GBMA.
LEAVE BENEFITS

SICK LEAVE

Sick leave for staff members is as follows:

Full-time Professional Employees:
- One day per contracted month (i.e. 10 month employees earn up to 10 sick leave days per year)
- Earnings for less than a full year are at the rate of one day per month
- Can be anticipated for the current contract year
- Can be accumulated without limit
- Cannot be claimed unless employee reports for work as stated in terms of the contract
- Accumulated leave can be used if employee is unable to report for work for reasons outlined under sick leave (not to exceed balance as of June 30 of immediately preceding school year)
- Must be taken in minimum of one-half day increments
- May be required to show reasonable proof of illness
- May be used for: personal illness, illness of the immediate family (mother, father, foster parents, adoptive parents, stepparent, stepfather, grandparents, grandchildren, wife, husband, children, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and any other relative living in the household of the employee)
- Can transfer up to 90 sick leave days from other school systems in Virginia
- Unused sick leave will be paid to employee upon retirement at a rate of $25 per day, not to exceed a total of $2,500 (employee must have completed a minimum of five years uninterrupted service with the Amherst County Public Schools)

For more information, refer to Policy GCBD.

Classified Staff Members:

Sick Leave is as follows:
- One day per contracted month for full-time employees (six hours or more per day) and one half day for part-time employees (i.e. full-time, 10 month employees earn up to 10 sick leave days per year, part-time 10 month employees earn up to 5 days per year)
- Earnings for less than a full year are at the rate of one day per month
- Can be anticipated for the current contract year
- Can be accumulated without limit
- Cannot be claimed unless employee reports to work as stated in terms of the contract
- Accumulated leave can be used if employee is unable to report for work for reasons outlined under sick leave (not to exceed balance as of June 30 of immediately preceding school year)
- Must be taken in minimum of one-half day increments
- May be required to show reasonable proof of illness
- May be used for: personal illness, illness of the immediate family (mother, father, foster parents, adoptive parents, stepmother, stepfather, grandparents, grandchildren, wife, husband, children, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and any other relative living in the household of the employee)
- Unused sick leave will be paid to the employee upon retirement at a rate of $25 per day for full-time employees and $12 per day for part-time employees, not to exceed a total of $2,500 (employees must have completed a minimum of five years uninterrupted service with Amherst County Schools)
- Any employee who is absent from work 15 consecutive days or a total of 20 days during the division’s calendar year, after all leave has been exhausted, will be considered to have voluntarily resigned his/her employment with the Amherst County Public Schools.

For more information, refer to Policy GDBD and GDBD-R.

**Personal Leave**

**Full-time employees who qualify for participation in the Virginia Retirement System are eligible to earn and utilize personal leave as follows:**

- Accrued rate of two days per year for employees hired before October 1 of current year
- Accrued rate of one day per year for employees hired by March 1 of current year
- Requests for leave must be made in writing using appropriate form
- Leave requests are subject to the immediate supervisor’s approval
- Leave requests on days designated as early dismissal for planning purposes, staff development, and days immediately before and after holidays granted only for emergencies or in extenuating circumstances
- Number of consecutive leave days requested should be limited
- Personal leave not to exceed 4 days may be carried forward
- Unused personal leave in excess of four days will be transferred to accumulated sick leave at the end of the fiscal year

Refer to Policy GDBD (classified employees)
Refer to Policy GCBD (professional employees)
Educational Leave

Licensed and administrative personnel are eligible for educational leave as follows:

- May be granted with or without pay
- Not to exceed 20 contracted days
- Requests must be submitted to the Superintendent
- Must have been employed by the Amherst County School Board for at least two previous years and must be able to fulfill the third year of contractual employment
- May be required to refund the amount of compensation of days of leave taken if third year contractual period is not fulfilled
- May be made up by altering work schedule

Refer to Policy GCBD

Family Medical Leave

The Amherst County Public School Board provides eligible employees with unpaid leave pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), 29 U.S.C. §2601 et seq. Eligible employees must comply with policy GCBE and should contact the Payroll and Benefits office for further information.

Annual Leave

Twelve month full-time salaried employees are eligible for annual leave as follows:

- 1 day annual leave for each completed calendar month for first 5 years of continuous service in a public school system in Virginia
- 1 and ¼ days of annual leave for each completed calendar month after 5 and up to 10 years of continuous service or in a public school system in Virginia
- 1 and ½ days of annual leave for each completed calendar month after 10 years of continuous service in a public school system in Virginia
- 1 and ¾ days of annual leave for each completed calendar month after 15 years of continuous service in a public school system in Virginia
- 2 days of annual leave for each complete calendar month after 20 years of continuous service in a public school system in Virginia
- Must submit application for leave to supervisor prior to beginning of leave
- Must be taken in no less than one-half day increments
- Lump sum payment for earned, accumulated, unused days up to a maximum of 48 days at annual per diem rate

Refer to Policy GCBD (professional staff)
Refer to Policy GDBD (classified staff)
Extended Leave

Tenured teachers, administrators, and instructional supervisors are eligible for extended leave as follows:

- Without pay (life and hospitalization insurance may be maintained if full premiums are paid by the employee and must be submitted to payroll office by the 15th of each month)
- Requested for full time study, foreign teaching assignments or exchange teaching, and service in teacher corps, VISTA, the Peace Corps, or other activities approved by the Superintendent
- Must submit written request to Superintendent prior to March 1 for succeeding school year
- Shall be for a period of one year
- Requires request for reinstatement after extended leave filed in the Office of the Superintendent (on or before March 1) for the upcoming school year
- Upon return from extended leave, previous assignment is not guaranteed

Refer to Policy GCBD-R

Leave of absence without pay

Tenured teachers, administrators, and instructional supervisors are eligible for leave of absence without pay as follows:

- Request must be addressed to the Superintendent stating the reason and length (not to exceed one year), and intention to resume employment at conclusion of leave
- Leave year not included when calculating years of service
- Leave year does not impact original date of hire
- Leave year not included when calculating seniority
- May participate in the group health care plan and the group life insurance plan by submitting entire premium amount to Payroll by the 15th of each month
- Upon return from leave without pay, previous assignment is not guaranteed
- Must notify the Superintendent of intention to return to work – 1 year leaves must be received by April 1 for upcoming school session, first semester leave must be received by December 1
- Leave for educational purposes requires documents verifying the completion of course work (12 semester hours, or 6 hours and 180 additional points, or the intent to complete these hours by the end of the semester) must be submitted with the request to return

Refer to Policy GCBD-R
Funeral Leave

Funeral leave for all staff members is as follows:
- May use sick leave for immediate family member’s funeral, not to exceed 5 days
- Immediate family includes: mother, father, foster parents, adoptive parents, stepmother, stepfather, grandparents, grandchildren, wife, husband, children, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and any other relative living in the household of the employee
- Additional days and all other funerals may be charged to annual leave, personal leave, or leave without pay

Refer to Policy GCBD-R (professional)
Refer to Policy GDBD-R (classified)

Federal and State Jury Duty

Jury duty for all staff members is as follows:
- Absent without loss of pay with verification from the Clerk of the Court of actual days served

Refer to Policy GCBD-R (professional)
Refer to Policy GDBD-R (classified)

Mandatory Court Appearance

Mandatory court appearance for all employees is as follows:
- May be absent without loss of pay and not required to use leave if employee is subpoenaed as court witness (except as defendant in criminal case) and copy of subpoena is transmitted to payroll office

Refer to Policy GCBD-R (professional)
Refer to Policy GDBD-R (classified)

Required Military Reserve Duty

Refer to Policy GCBEB (professional); GCBD-R
Refer to Policy GDBD-R (classified)

Work Related Illness/Injury

Any employee who is injured on the job or develops a work related illness, must use the procedure as follows:
- Notify supervisor immediately
- Complete the Employee’s First Report of Accident Form
• Complete the Victim Report and the Preferred Provider Consent Form
• If medical attention is required, consult with a physician on the Preferred Provider Consent Form, or in the case of an emergency, the employee may seek medical treatment. Any further treatment must be obtained from a member of the panel. Specialist referrals will be made by the panel members as needed. Failure to follow this procedure may result in the employee’s forfeiture of worker’s compensation benefits.

Refer to Policy GDQA for Preferred Providers

**General Benefits**

**Tuition Reimbursement**

*Full-time employees of the Amherst County public Schools are eligible for tuition reimbursement at a rate not to exceed a total of $465.00 per year. The annual cutoff date of reimbursement requests is June 1. In order to receive tuition reimbursement, employees must complete the steps as follows:*

- Use the Application for Tuition Refund Program to request and obtain approval for reimbursement no later than October 1 (fall courses), March 1 (spring courses), and June 15 (summer courses)
- Complete the Request for Reimbursement – Tuition Refund Program Application. Compile the information requested on this form and send it to the Human Resource Office. In order to receive reimbursement for the current school year, this step must be completed by June 1.

Refer to Policy GBP

**Graduate Supplement Program**

*All professional employees of the Amherst County Public Schools are eligible to receive graduate supplements under the criteria as follows:*

- Must obtain approval of Master’s program by submitting a letter of intent to the Human Resources Office
- Must complete a Graduate/Master’s Degree Supplement Application by September 15 of each school year until completion of the Master’s Degree program
- Must be enrolled in approved accredited graduate program leading to a Master’s Degree
- Program must be affiliated with regional accrediting agencies such as SACS and state accrediting agencies
- Must complete a minimum of six hours per year in order to continue to receive the initial increment for graduate work
Failure to complete the Master’s Degree program within five years of receiving the initial supplement will result in termination of the graduate supplements.

Stipends for graduate supplements will be determined annually by the School Board.

Supplements are based on three levels as follows: Level I – completion and documentation of nine graduate hours, Level II – completion and documentation of eighteen graduate hours, Level III – completion and documentation of Master’s Degree. Graduate hours/Master’s Degree Supplement Application may be obtained in the Human Resources Office. Refer to Policy GCBCB-R.

Professional Staff Development

The goal of the Amherst County Public Schools’ professional development program is to provide better learning experiences in the classroom which result in a positive effect on student performance and attitude. These programs are designed to support teachers, principals, and administrators in implementing the Standard of Learning and the Standards of Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia.

Utilizing total staff involvement, the professional development process consists of identifying the areas in which improvement is needed, establishing programs that are designed to achieve the desired results, and implementing these programs with evaluation and revisions as needed.

New Teacher Induction

Mentor Teacher Clinical Faculty Program

The Amherst County Public Schools, Randolph-Macon Woman’s College, and Sweet Briar College Mentor/Teacher Clinical Faculty Program is a collaborative program designed to assist pre-service teachers and beginning teachers to make a successful transition into full-time teaching.

The program includes experienced teachers who have received intensive training to learn to serve as mentors to all new teachers to the Amherst County Public Schools. Also, these mentors have been trained to serve as clinical faculty members for intern teachers from Randolph-Macon Woman’s College and Sweet Briar.
The mentor program provides experienced teachers with an opportunity to develop professionalism, collegiality, mentoring, and leadership skills. As they serve as mentors and clinical faculty members, they have an opportunity to grow professionally; therefore, this program is viewed as a vehicle for growth for new teachers as well as experienced teachers.

Mentors receive many benefits for participating in the program, including monetary stipends, release time to assist new teachers, materials and supplies, tuition waiver, clinical faculty status at both Sweet Briar College and Randolph-Macon Woman’s College, etc. Additionally, new teachers and mentors receive technical support via list service and a web-site established for the program.

The program is designed to meet the new professional’s need whether the new teacher is an experienced teacher new to the Amherst County Public Schools or a new teacher in the first year of teaching. Mentors have been trained to recognize the stages of teaching so that they can tailor their assistance to meet the specific needs of the new teacher. For example, an experienced teacher new to the Amherst County Public Schools may need orientation regarding curriculum, specific school and division procedures, and networking with other professionals, while a beginning teacher may need more intensive assistance, including strategies for classroom managements and effective instruction. Regardless of the needs, the mentor is available to assist the new professional to help him/her be a successful member of the Amherst County Public School’s team.

**Virginia Retirement System**

School division employees who are eligible (full-time employees) will be members of the Virginia Retirement System. Employee retirement benefits shall be governed by the rules and regulations established by the Virginia Retirement System.

The Amherst County School Board pays the employer’s contribution and the employee pays for five percent of the contribution to VRS which is included in the employee’s salary.

**Group Life Insurance**

Group Life Insurance is provided for all full-time employees and the premium is paid by the Amherst County School Board. This policy is provided through Minnesota Life in conjunction with the Virginia Retirement System. The amount of life insurance is twice the amount of the annual salary raised to the next higher one thousand dollars. The policy provides double indemnity in the event of accidental death.
**Employee Assistance Program**

Counseling services are available through the Employee Assistance Program of Central Virginia. The Amherst County School Board provides this program at no cost to its employees. Employees can contact the Employee Assistance Program by calling 434-845-1246 or by accessing the program via [www.allpointseap.org](http://www.allpointseap.org).

**Tax Shelters and Annuity Programs**

Employees may elect to shelter funds for out-of-pocket medical expenses and dependent care from taxes through a Section 125 plan administered by American Fidelity. Employees have an opportunity to enroll in this program on an annual basis.

**Health Care Plan**

All full-time and part-time (must work a minimum of 17.5 hours per week) employees of the Amherst County Public Schools are eligible to participate in the division’s health care plan. Affordable coverage as defined by the Affordable Care Act, is provided by the school divisions health care plan provided (Anthem). Employee and employer premium rates subject to change based on annual insurance provider renewal rates.

Eligible employees who are not covered under Anthem may enroll during the open enrollment period from August 1 to August 30 of each year. Upon retirement, participating employees may remain on the plan (until medicare eligible) or elect COBRA continuation. Dependents of retirees will be offered COBRA.

**Health Care Plan – Late Entrants**

Employees or dependents who request to enroll in our group’s health plan more than 31 days after they become eligible for coverage are considered Late Entrants. A Late Entrant is eligible to enroll in the plan at the next open enrollment period or at the time of a special enrollment period. A special enrollment period is created when an individual loses other coverage within 30 days after the event which creates the special enrollment period.