

CHATHAM CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD POLICY SERIES 400 OPERATIONS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

400. OPERATIONS – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

401. FACILITIES AND GROUNDS

401.1. Buildings and Grounds Regulations

401.2. Community Use of School Facilities

401.2.1. Regulations

401.2.2. Procedures

401.2.3. Charges

401.3. Disposition of School Property

401.4. Equipment Use

401.5. Facility Changes and Construction

401.5.1. Alterations

401.5.2. Construction

401.5.3. Repair

401.5.4. Disability Compliance

401.6. Fire Prevention

401.7. Maintenance

401.8. Traffic and Parking on School Property

401.9. Vandalism, Theft, and Building Damage

402. FINANCE

402.1. Fiscal Management

402.2. Fiscal Year

402.3. Annual Budget

402.4. Accounting System

402.5. Depositories

402.6. Internal Fiscal Procedures

402.6.1. Reference Documents

402.6.2. Record Handling Instructions

402.6.3. Invoices

402.6.4. Reports

402.7. Field Trip Monies

402.8. Purchasing

402.8.1. Purchasing Authority

402.8.2. Purchase Orders and Contracts

402.8.3. Receiving and Inspecting

402.8.4. Vendor Relations

402.9. Insurance and Bond Coverage

402.10. Financial Audits

403. MISCELLANEOUS

403.1. Awards and Scholarships

403.2. Distribution of Materials by Non-Students

403.3. Gifts and Bequests

403.4. Indexing of Computer Databases

403.5. Outside Advertising

403.6. Public Complaints and Concerns

403.7. Public Records Requirements

403.7.1. Exempt and Confidential Documents

403.7.2. Destruction of Public Records

403.8. Sales and Solicitation in School

403.9. School-wide Grievance, Appeals, and Hearing Procedures

403.9.1. Introduction and Objectives

403.9.2. Informal Grievance Procedure

403.9.3. Formal Grievance Procedure

403.9.4. Appeals of Right to the School Board

403.9.5. Discretionary Appeals to the Board

403.9.6. Board Hearing Procedures.

400. OPERATIONS – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

401. FACILITIES AND GROUNDS

401.1. Buildings and Grounds Regulations

The Board shall ensure the School complies with federal and state safety rules and regulations applicable to buildings and grounds.

The School shall provide a safe working and learning environment, in part, by establishing appropriate safety procedures to protect students, employees, and visitors to the School. All students, employees, and visitors shall adhere to all safety procedures at all times while on School grounds.

All School personnel shall be immediately required to report to the Head of School or designee any occupational injury or illness, safety hazard, unsanitary condition, damage to School property, or needed repair.

401.2. Community Use of School Facilities

The Board recognizes the capital investment the community has in School buildings and facilities and believes that such facilities should be used for legitimate community purposes.

Therefore, outside groups may use available School facilities for educational, civic, cultural, recreational and related purposes provided such use is not detrimental to the School or its mission and complies with all applicable laws, ordinances, and School policies and requirements. Denial of facility use will not be based on an applicant organization's viewpoints but on whether its use is consistent with the purposes and rules established by the School for offering the facility to outside groups.

School properties may be made available for community use as provided below:

- a. The needs and requirements of the School's programs shall receive first consideration in the assignment of School facilities.
- b. School-related organizations shall be given priority over non-School related organizations.
- c. Approved School youth shall be given consideration over community adult groups.

The use of School facilities should be consistent with the mission, purposes, and best interests of the School, must not conflict with regular School programming, and be consistent with School policies regarding proper conduct in the School community. The Head of School or designee may establish any other necessary rules or procedures to carry out this policy and to comply with all applicable legal requirements.

401.2.1. Regulations

- a. The user must adhere to the current stipulations governing the use of the facilities and may be held financially responsible for any damage to School buildings, grounds, or equipment that occurs during such use.

- b. School facilities shall not be used for activities that clearly contradict educational or civic values that the School is responsible for inculcating in its students. Activities may not injure members of the School community, School property, or the reputation or mission of the School. The School reserves the right to restrict or deny facility use when such use involves purposes or expression not protected by law.
- c. No group may be granted permission to use a School facility for a period longer than four consecutive months. After each term of use, a group wishing to continue using such property will be required to submit a new application.

401.2.2. Procedures

Individuals or organizations desiring to use School facilities may be required to file an application and other materials required by the Head of School.

The Head of School or designee shall review any application and determine whether the use is acceptable under School guidelines. If acceptable, the Head of School shall bring a recommendation to the Board for review and approval.

401.2.3. Charges

Reasonable charges will be fairly and consistently assessed for any public use of School facilities.

401.3. Disposition of School Property

When the Board determines that any School-owned real or personal property is no longer suitable or necessary for School purposes, the Board may dispose of the property as provided by law.

401.4. Equipment Use

Equipment and materials purchased for the School are not to be used for private purposes except at the discretion of the Head of School when such use primarily serves School purposes or is in conjunction with the rental or use of School facilities under this policy.

401.5. Facility Changes and Construction

401.5.1. Alterations

The Board shall approve any alterations to School equipment or facilities, which require changing the existing wiring, carpentry, plumbing, or other structural systems of the School in excess of an amount predetermined by the Board.

401.5.2. Construction

All new School construction shall be completed in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other accommodation laws to ensure disabled individuals are readily able to access and use the facilities according to their legal rights.

401.5.3. Repair

The Head of School or the Board shall perform periodic reviews of the School's facilities, services, programs, and activities to ensure accessibility to disabled persons (when each service, program, and activity is examined in its entirety).

401.5.4. Disability Compliance

If the Board determines a facility, service, program, or activity is not legally accessible to disabled persons, it shall take appropriate remedial actions, including altering a building, service, program, or activity, unless such remedial action would result in a fundamental change in the nature of the service, program, or activity, or present the Board with an undue financial burden.

401.6. Fire Prevention

The Head of School or his designee shall ensure compliance with the following fire hazard procedures:

- a. Ensure that all corridors, halls, and tower stairways used for exiting the building are kept clear of anything that could interfere with the safe and orderly exodus of building occupants. This includes, but is not limited to, restricting the use of the corridors, walls, and tower stairways for storage.
- b. Ensure that all exit doors are kept in good working condition and that all doors required for the prompt and orderly exodus of building occupants are kept unlocked at all times while the building is in use.
- c. Prohibit changes in electrical wiring in any School building or structure unless authorized by the Board in accordance with Board policy and performed by a licensed electrical contractor.
- d. Ensure that any combustible materials required for instructional purposes or for the operation of the School be stored in a safe and orderly manner, including providing a well-ventilated place to store any oily rags, mops, or other supplies that present spontaneous combustion risks.
- e. Ensure the regular removal of all trash and rubbish from the School building to prevent its accumulation on School premises.
- f. Inspect Schools buildings periodically during the regular School session to ensure they are free from trash accumulation and other fire hazards. The inspections shall include cafeterias, gymnasiums, boiler rooms, storage rooms, auditoriums and stage areas, and all classrooms.
- g. File a report each month during the regular School session detailing the date of the last fire drill, the time required to evacuate each building, that inspections have been made as prescribed by law, and any other information as deemed necessary for fire safety by state and local regulation.
- h. Cooperate fully with the authorized building inspector, electrical inspector, county fire marshal, and other government officials in making the inspections required by law and notify the Board of the failure of any such inspection.
- i. Notify the Board of all recommendations resulting from inspections so that the Board may undertake appropriate corrective actions to make the necessary corrections.

401.7. Maintenance

The Board shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting the School's building and grounds in safe and appropriate condition for use at all times. The Board shall also maintain all appropriate records in connection with this duty.

401.8. Traffic and Parking on School Property

The Head of School or the Board may issue rules and procedures for safe traffic and parking operations. The speed limit on School roads and parking lots shall be ten miles per hour. Traffic calming devices, such as speed bumps, may be installed on School property as the Head of School or Board deem necessary. The Board or the School shall not be liable or responsible for damage to cars or other vehicles in operation or parked on School property.

401.9. Vandalism, Theft, and Building Damage

Vandalism is the willful destruction of School property, equipment, or materials. School personnel shall report to the Head of School or designee in writing any instance of forceful entry onto School property or into any School building. In the event that theft or damage to School property results from forced entry, the Head of School and other School personnel shall make a determination of the losses. Law enforcement will be contacted if necessary.

402. FINANCE

402.1. Fiscal Management

As trustee of community, state, and federal funds allocated for use in local education, the Board has the responsibility to protect these funds and to use them wisely. The Board shall establish procedures that promote efficient, accurate, and effective fiscal management. To this end, the Board endeavors to:

- a. Encourage advance planning by using sound budgeting and financial practices;
- b. Explore all practicable and legal revenue streams;
- c. Use School resources to maximize educational benefits;
- d. Ensure efficient and accurate accounting and reporting procedures;
- e. Maintain the per pupil expenditure required to provide high quality education; and
- f. Ensure that the School's fiscal affairs are conducted in strict compliance with the law.

402.2. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall begin July 1 each year and conclude June 30 of the succeeding calendar year.

402.3. Annual Budget

Budget planning shall be a year-round process that encourages input from administrators, teachers and other School personnel, and members of the School community.

402.4. Accounting System

The School shall establish and maintain a financial accounting and reporting system designed to track the School's assets, liabilities, equities, revenues, and expenditures using the modified accrual basis of accounting. The system shall be designed to show appropriations and estimated revenues as established in the budget resolution as originally adopted and subsequently amended.

402.5. Depositories

The Board shall designate one or more banks, savings and loan associations, or trust companies in North Carolina as official depositories of the School. No money belonging to the School shall be deposited in any other place, bank, savings and loan, or trust company other than an official depository.

402.6. Internal Fiscal Procedures

These procedures define the process for the control and disposition of invoices, reimbursements to employees, bank statements, and payroll.

402.6.1. Reference Documents

Relevant documents may include any of the following:

- a. Policies and Procedures Manual
- b. Accounting Inventory
- c. Monthly Bank Statements
- d. Payroll Schedules
- e. Employee Payroll Worksheet
- f. Employee Payroll Change Log
- g. Employee Absenteeism Record
- h. Monthly Budget Report
- i. ISIS General Ledger Check Register
- j. Interim Budget Update
- k. School Budget Resolution

402.6.2. Record Handling Instructions

All financial records generated from the execution of these procedures will be maintained by the School's accounting office and/or firm, on site, in accordance with proper protocols for preparing an annual audit or as otherwise determined necessary by the Board.

402.6.3. Invoices

- a. All invoices will be inventoried by the Head of School or designee to ensure the receipt of all purchased services or products.
- b. All invoices shall be reviewed and approved prior to being forwarded to the School accounting service.
- c. All employee reimbursements for purchases or travel shall be approved in writing by the Head of School or designee prior to submission to the School accounting service for payment.
- d. The School accounting service will not process incomplete invoices until it receives all appropriate documentation from the School.

402.6.4. Reports

- a. The School accounting service will submit the Monthly Budget Report to the Board at its regularly scheduled monthly meetings.
- b. The Head of School will receive an Interim Budget Update on an "as requested" basis.
- c. As granted by any School Budget Resolution, the Head of School shall have the authority to reallocate budgeted amounts as specified in such resolution guidelines.
- d. Any excess beyond such resolution guidelines must be approved by the Board prior to the School accounting service adjusting the budget and disbursing funds.

402.7. Field Trip Monies

NOTE: This policy does not affect money collected for School events open to the public or supplies paid for by the School.

Every teacher and teacher assistant (TA) that collects money for any events, i.e., field trips, transportation, club dues, etc. is required to follow this policy without exception. Failure to follow this policy may subject staff members to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

- a. Each teacher that collects monies will be given a receipt book with duplicate receipts. Each time a teacher or TA collects money from a student, parent, or guardian, an original written receipt is to be given to the student, parent, or guardian, and a duplicate copy retained by the teacher or TA along with the money collected.
- b. Each day that money is collected, the teacher or TA must submit it to the school finance officer according to the following procedures:
 - i. The teacher or TA shall calculate the total money collected, record the total on the receipts, and ensure the receipt amount and actual money collected match.
 - ii. Upon submission to the finance officer, the money shall be counted immediately in the presence of the teacher or TA to verify the total amount submitted. If time constraints prevent the immediate verification of the amount submitted, the money shall be placed in a sealed envelope, deposited with the finance officer, and verified as soon as practicable thereafter.
 - iii. The finance officer shall give the teacher or TA, who turns in the money, a receipt with the total money collected, which receipt the teacher or TA must keep for his/her records. All receipts should be kept in a safe, secure place for the School year.
 - iv. No money is to be left in a classroom overnight, even if the classroom is locked.
- c. Field trip and other special activity checks shall be made payable to Chatham Charter School.
- d. After all money is collected, it shall be timely deposited and allotted to the appropriate account.
- e. If a bank for any reason returns checks, it is the responsibility of the student's teacher or TA to contact the parent or guardian and collect the funds to be re-deposited. Staff must follow the same procedures for writing and maintaining receipts and copies for any funds collected and re-deposited.
- f. Immediately prior to a field trip, as feasible, the finance staff shall write a check to the vendor for the amount collected and deposited. Staff should keep a record of this transaction in a safe, secure place for the School year.
- g. If a payment is made through an online system used by the school, an automatic receipt will be generated for the payee. The School will receive a ledger of transaction.

402.8. Purchasing

402.8.1. Purchasing Authority

The Head of School in accordance with state law and sound purchasing practices shall oversee all purchasing authority and purchasing-related activities. The School finance staff shall ensure that proper records are maintained for all purchases.

402.8.2. Purchase Orders and Contracts

All school purchases will be pre-approved by designated school officials. Purchase orders are the preferred method of purchase; however, other types of purchases and services that do not fall under the purchase order or contractual formats will be acceptable by auditor standards. All contracts shall also be properly approved and executed and should contain the wording:

No indebtedness of any kind incurred or created by the Charter School shall constitute

an indebtedness of the State of its political subdivisions, and no indebtedness of the Charter School shall involve or be secured by the faith, credit, or taxing power of the State or its political subdivisions.

Unauthorized purchase orders are illegal and may cause the individual making the unauthorized order or contract to assume personal responsibility. Creditors are on notice that any order or contract not properly authorized by School officials may not be honored.

402.8.3. Receiving and Inspecting

Personnel responsible for purchasing shall establish and maintain appropriate receiving procedures for all supplies, materials, and equipment.

Personnel receiving delivered items shall:

- a. Perform an inspection and have ready access to item specifications;
- b. Be responsible for determining that the items received are in good quality condition;
- c. Conduct an actual count of the quantity delivered and enter the count in the receiving document; and
- d. Submit deficiency and complaint reports as necessary.

402.8.4. Vendor Relations

In all procurement activities, employees and agents of the Board shall:

- a. Represent the best interests of the School and its educational programs;
- b. Endeavor to maximize value for the School for each dollar spent;
- c. Give all responsible bidders equal consideration and use unbiased judgment in determining which products and services best meet the School's specifications and needs;
- d. Discourage vendors or potential vendors from offering gifts of more than nominal value and decline any such gifts that are offered; and
- e. Accord a prompt and courteous reception, insofar as conditions permit, to all who call on the appropriate purchasing office or officer, with written permission of the Board President or Head of School, on legitimate business interests.

402.9. Insurance and Bond Coverage

The Board shall purchase insurance, as it deems necessary or otherwise required by law. The Head of School or his designee shall be responsible for managing all such insurance-related policies, programs, and services.

The Board shall purchase insurance necessary to reasonably safeguard the School's real and personal property assets. Insurance policies and policy provisions to be considered include those covering error & omissions, general liability, boiler and machinery, auto liability, workers' compensation and fidelity bonds for finance and other School officials. When individual employees or volunteers of the School must purchase insurance to carry out their School functions, the School shall compensate them for such insurance relative to the cost of such coverage.

402.10. Financial Audits

The Board shall select a qualified accounting and auditing firm certified to perform charter school

audits, including that of the School retirement plan. The audit contract shall be in writing, include all necessary terms and conditions, and shall be submitted to the State Department of Public Instruction for approval concerning its form, terms, and conditions. The terms and conditions of the audit contract shall include the scope of the audit, require the auditor to prepare a printed report containing all financial statements, and be conducted using generally accepted accounting principles.

The auditor shall conduct the audit and report the results directly to the Board as soon as feasible after the close of the fiscal year. A copy of the audit shall also be filed with the State Department of Public Instruction and Department of Revenue. The auditor should also submit all bills or claims for audit fees and costs to the Board for approval.

All officers, employees, and agents of the School having custody of public money or fiscal record-keeping responsibilities shall produce all books, records, and financial information as requested by the auditor. No member of the Board or any other public officer, employee, or agent shall conceal, falsify, or refuse to deliver or divulge any books, records, or information, with intent thereby to mislead the auditor or impede or interfere with the audit.

403. MISCELLANEOUS

403.1. Awards and Scholarships

Any award or scholarship awarded in the name of the School or associated with the School shall be awarded in a fair and legal manner.

403.2. Distribution of Materials by Non-Students

Except as otherwise provided by School policy, persons who are not students may not distribute any materials at the School or at School activities, except that materials directly related to the subject of a School-sponsored activity may be distributed if approved by the Head of School or designee.

The Head of School may allow or develop rules that allow limited distribution to students of materials that address educationally beneficial activities or events for students or which directly promote the School's mission.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to create an open or limited open forum that would allow persons other than students' access to School property for the purpose of distributing materials or engaging in speech not appropriate in a closed forum.

403.3. Gifts and Bequests

The Board, or the Head of School on behalf of the Board, may accept any bequest or gift of money or property to be used by the School to further its educational mission. Any restrictive gift or bequest directing how the gift or bequest shall be used shall be subject to approval by the Board and shall not bind the School in any way that would undermine or threaten to violate the School's mission, policies, charter, or any applicable law or regulation.

403.4. Indexing of Computer Databases

All School computer databases are to be indexed as required by state law and relevant guidelines of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History.

403.5. Public Complaints and Concerns

The Board takes all complaints concerning the School, its employees, and operations very seriously. Any member of the School community with a complaint or concern should make a good faith effort to solve the problem by taking the following informal steps as the situation warrants:

- a. Complaints involving the performance of an employee should first be discussed with the employee, if practicable. If such a discussion does not resolve the matter, the complaint should then be referred to the employee's immediate supervisor for resolution.
- b. Complaints involving the quality of the program/School facilities should first be discussed with the School employee in charge of the program/facility in question.
- c. Complaints involving the implementation of Board policy should first be directed toward or discussed with the person responsible for implementing the policy.

If informal action does not remedy the situation, a formal complaint may be filed in accordance with School grievance procedures contained in these policies.

403.6. Public Records Requirements

A public record, as defined by state law, is any record, in any form, whether hardcopy or electronic, "made or received pursuant to law or ordinance in connection with the transaction of public business" of the School unless it is otherwise protected or exempted from public disclosure by federal or state law, including, but not limited to, student records under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the North Carolina public records law (G.S. 132-1 through 132-9).

A copy of the North Carolina law is available at:

http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByChapter/Chapter_132.html.

The Head of School or his designee shall serve as the School's public records officer to ensure compliance and proper review of all public records policies, practices and requests. Upon proper request, the School shall make such public records available in a reasonable time and manner and at reasonable cost of production. The School is only required to provide access to such records in the form in which the School maintains them.

All public records requests shall be made in writing. Any denial of a records request and the reasons therefore shall also be in writing.

403.6.1. Exempt and Confidential Documents

The School and its employees will protect the confidentiality of all documents that are not available to the public. In instances involving records containing public and confidential information, the School shall redact confidential information from any records made available.

Among the documents specifically exempted under North Carolina's public records law are the following:

- a. Documents made within a three-year period pursuant to communications protected by attorney-client privilege
- b. Address Confidentiality Program Information: the actual address and telephone number of a program participant in the Address Confidentiality Program established under Chapter 15C of the General Statutes may not be disclosed except as provided in Chapter

15C of the General Statutes

- c. Controlled Substances Reporting System Information: Information compiled or maintained in the Controlled Substances Reporting System established under Article 5E of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes
- d. Social security information as proscribed by law
- e. Confidential student records, as described below
- f. Confidential employee records, as described below
- g. Minutes of closed Board sessions, records pertaining to matters as may be discussed in closed Board session, and such other records as may be required to be kept confidential by law or as may be exempt from disclosure

403.6.2. Destruction of Public Records

The School shall comply with all state and federal record-keeping requirements and any applicable Records Retention and Disposition Schedules issued by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History. The Head of School or designee may establish additional procedures for maintaining and destroying School records in accordance with the approved schedules.

403.7. Sales and Solicitation in School

Except as provided elsewhere by School policy, the distribution of publications and the sale of goods or services are prohibited on School grounds during the School day and at School activities if the materials are unrelated to instruction or a School-sponsored activity. Materials directly related to the subject of a School-sponsored activity may be distributed with prior approval of the Head of School or designee.

403.8. School-wide Grievance, Appeals, and Hearing Procedures

The following shall govern grievances, appeals and hearings by any member of the school community, unless otherwise modified by the Board.

403.8.1. Introduction and Objectives

The School seeks to provide a process by which students, parents, and staff can resolve concerns in a timely and effective manner that is balanced with the need for efficient and effective School operations. Toward this end, this policy establishes mechanisms by which grievances should be addressed through informal and, if appropriate, formal means. All references herein to the Head of School include any person assigned as the Head of School's designee.

403.8.2. Informal Grievance Procedure

All concerns should first be addressed directly and informally with the persons involved. This includes reasonably notifying those causing and involved in the grievance, allowing them to reasonably respond, and giving them an opportunity to make good faith efforts toward resolution. If necessary, individuals involved are encouraged to seek the assistance of an objective party to assist with informal resolution.

403.8.3. Formal Grievance Procedure

Persons must seek informal, timely resolution before filing a formal grievance, unless doing so is not reasonably feasible, would be futile, or if formal grievance procedures are legally required. The grievant may then file a formal grievance with the Head of School within ten school days after the last informal attempt at resolution. If informal resolution is not required, the individual shall file the grievance within ten school days of the last instance causing the grievance.

The formal procedure shall be initiated by submitting to the Head of School a written request for redress that succinctly states the specific grievance(s), the supporting facts, the basis in Board policy or law (citing specific policies or laws), the requested relief, and the efforts made to resolve the matter informally. The Head of School may require submission of an approved form for such grievance filing.

The Head of School shall determine whether informal resolution requirements have been satisfied or are not required. If the Head of School determines that the grievant is entitled to a formal grievance process, he/she shall provide a copy of the formal grievance to all other persons implicated by the grievance. The Head of School shall reasonably investigate and consider the matter (which may include meeting with the parties involved and holding an informal hearing) and issue a decision within ten school days from the date the grievance is filed. Additional time for the Head of School's decision shall be allowed when reasonably required by circumstances. All deliberations shall be held in confidence where feasible and involve only persons in a need-to-know position. A decision by the Head of School under these grievance procedures shall be considered a "final administrative decision."

403.8.4. Appeals of Right to the School Board

A person has the right to appeal any final administrative decision affecting a constitutional or other legal interest, and/or an interest of the type listed below:

- a. Suspension or expulsion of a student for more than ten days (per School suspension and expulsion procedures required by Chapter 115C, Article 27 of the North Carolina General Statutes);
- b. An alleged violation of a specified federal or state law, State Board of Education rule, or local board policy;
- c. The loss or reduction of salary of a school employee under a specific-term contract who is not employed at will; or
- d. Any other decision that, by law, provides for a right of appeal to the board of directors and for which there is no other statutory appeal procedure.

Any person seeking a hearing under this section may request a Board hearing by submitting to the Board Chairperson a request in writing by certified mail or personal delivery within ten school days after the final administrative decision by the Head of School. The person making such request shall also promptly deliver a copy of the hearing request to the Head of School.

403.8.5. Discretionary Appeals to the Board

Any person aggrieved by a decision not involving a matter addressed in Section D above may request a Board hearing by submitting to the Board Chairperson a request in writing by certified mail or personal delivery within ten school days after the final administrative decision by the Head of School. The person making such request shall also promptly deliver a copy of the hearing request to the Head of School. In such cases, the Board has the discretion to grant or deny a hearing.

The Board shall notify the person making the request and the Head of School of its decision, and if a hearing is granted, the time, place, and manner of such hearing.

403.8.6. Board Hearing Procedures

In all appeals to the Board, the Board shall provide adequate notice of hearing rights and procedures to all parties concerned and keep a record of any hearing conducted. All hearings conducted hereunder shall conform to G.S. 115C-45(c).

In the case of hearings required by right under Section D of G.S. 115C-45(c), all parties have the right to appear before the entire Board, to be represented by counsel or other representative, to submit documentation, and to reasonably examine and cross-examine witnesses. In the case of an employee grievance concerning a loss or reduction of salary, the employee may request and shall be entitled to receive written notice as to the reasons for the final administrative decision; the notice shall be provided to the employee at a time reasonably in advance of any Board hearing.

All discretionary hearings allowed under Section E of G.S. 115C-45(c) may be based on the written record or, instead, by personal appearance of the parties. The Board may designate a hearing officer or panel comprised of one or more Board members to act upon such hearing requests on behalf of the Board. The Board reserves the discretion to determine the manner by which it shall conduct such hearings.

Board hearings (by right and by discretion under sections D and E, respectively) shall be conducted within ten school days from the date the hearing is requested, unless circumstances reasonably require additional time. A final Board decision shall be rendered and delivered in writing to the respective parties within 5 school days of concluding the hearing. The decision of the Board shall be final.