CHALLENGING ALL STUDENTS TO ATTAIN THEIR GREATEST POTENTIAL

LOWNDES COUNTY
School District
CALEDONIA • NEW HOPE • WEST LOWNDES • CAREER TECH

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026

A Guide for Students and Parents

LOWNDES COUNTY
School District
CALEDONIA • NEW HOPE • WEST LOWNDES • CAREER TECH

CALEDONIA







NEW HOPE







WEST LOWNDES





CAREER TECH



LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

The Board of Education meets on the second Friday of each month at 12:30 p.m. The meeting is held in the board room of the Superintendent's Office, 512 Lehmberg Road Columbus, MS 39702 (662-244-5000). Members of the board are:

Jane Kilgore, President	Wesley Barrett, Secretary	Jacqueline Gray
Brad Fleming, Vice President	Jeff Smith, Attorney	Brad Fleming

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Sam Allison	Superintendent	244-5005
Matt Keith	Asst. Superintendent-Support Services	244-5027
Stefanie Jones	Asst. Superintendent-Student Services	244-5019
Sayonia Garvin	Business Officer/ Administrator	244-5016
Kerry Bailey	Human Resources Director	244-5010
Dr. Wes Carlisle	Technology and Assessment Coordinator	244-5018
Dr. Kristie Jones	Federal Programs Director	244-5030
Dr. Rhonda Locke	Special Education Director	244-5024
Andrew Matthews	Child Nutrition Director	244-5021

SUPPORT STAFF

Roger Gaudet	Network Manager	244-5006
Stephen Little	Maintenance Supervisor	434-6123
Dennis Aldridge	Transportation Supervisor	434-6299
Byron Weeks	Janitorial Supervisor	251-9847

LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOLS

Caledonia Elementary School (K-5) 9509 Wolfe Rd, Caledonia, MS 39740	Roger Hill, Principal Phone 356-2050 / Fax 356-2065
Caledonia Middle School (6-8) 105 Cavalier Drive, Caledonia, MS 39740	Murray Woody, Principal Phone 356-2042 / Fax 356-2045
Caledonia High School (9-12) 111 Cavalier Drive, Caledonia, MS 3940	Gregory Elliott, Principal Phone 356-2001 / Fax 356-2036
New Hope Lower Elementary (K-2) 199 Enlow Drive, Columbus, MS 39702	Angela Wilcox, Principal Phone 244-4760 / Fax 244-4775
New Hope Upper Elementary (3-5) 462 Center Rd, Columbus, MS 39702	Andrew Edwards, Principal Phone 244-4780 / Fax
New Hope Middle School (6-8) 3419 New Hope Rd, Columbus, MS 39702	Eric Guerrero, Principal Phone 244-4740 / Fax 244-4758
New Hope High School (9-12) 2920 New Hope Rd, Columbus, MS 39702	Matt Smith, Principal Phone 244-4701 / 244-4725
West Lowndes Elementary School (K-6) 1000 Gilmer-Wilburn Rd, Columbus, MS 39701	Robert Sanders, Principal Phone 244-5050 / Fax 328-2912
West Lowndes High School (7-12) 644 South Frontage Rd, Columbus, MS 39701	Antonio Magee, Principal Phone 244-5070 / Fax 327-3353
LCSD Alternative School 3419 New Hope Road, Columbus, MS 39702	Dr. Aaron Lee, Principal Phone 244-5060 / Fax 327-4857
Career Technology Center 1085 Lehmberg Road, Columbus, MS 39702	Susan McClelland, Vocational & Tech Prep Director Phone 244-5038 / Fax 240-4108



VISION

Provide a superior educational system that challenges all students to attain their greatest intellectual, social, and personal potential.

MISSION

Challenge all students to attain their greatest potential.

BELIEFS

- Fully Engaged Students
- Productive and Purposeful Learning Environments
- Equity
- Shared Responsibility
- Mutual Respect
- Motivation Through a Wholistic Approach
- Individualistic and Challenging Instruction

GOALS

- Student achievement will increase annually.
- The district will utilize emerging technologies and programs at the highest level of achievement and accountability to ensure that students will be college and career ready.
- Promote standards-based, engaged learning environments that are guided by evident student need.
- Fully engage parents, community and staff in the education of our students.
- Recruit and train an effective workforce that is data driven and results oriented.
- Every school is rated B or higher.

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NOTICES

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that affords parents the right to have access to their child's educational records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the educational records. When a student turns 18 years old or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, the rights under FERPA transfer from the parent to the student ("eligible student"). Every year, educational agencies and institutions must notify parents and eligible students of their rights under FERPA.
For more information regarding FERPA, please visit our website. https://www.lowndes.k12.ms.us/

NON-DISCRIMINATION / TITLE IX

STUDENTS COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT – TITLE IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is an anti-discrimination law that states no person in the United States, on the basis of sex, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The policy of this board forbids unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature amounting to or constituting harassment and/or discrimination against any student in the district. The board of education will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by any of its students.

The Lowndes County School District has appointed Kerry Bailey (662-244-5010) to serve as the Title IX Coordinator. This person is authorized to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies, including sexual harassment, and to coordinate the district's compliance with Title IX:

SECTION 504

A Section 504 Coordinator is responsible for ensuring a school or organization complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination based on disability. This person implements policies, procedures, and safeguards to prevent discrimination and ensure equal access for individuals with disabilities. The Lowndes County School District has designated Dr. Rhonda Locke, 1053 Hwy 45 South, Columbus, MS, 39701, (662-244 -5024) to handle inquiries regarding Section 504.

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (JAA)

The Lowndes County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in the admission to and provision of educational programs, activities, and services or in employment opportunities and benefits.

Every student in this district will have equal educational opportunities regardless of his/her race, color, creed, sex, handicap, religion, or marital status. No student shall be excluded on such basis from participating in, or having access to, any courses, athletic teams, counseling, employment assistance, or extra-curricular activities.

Furthermore, any awards, honors, etc., of any kind will be based solely upon merit, hard work, and ability and shall have no relationship to the person's color, creed, or national origin.

TOBACCO/SMOKE FREE BUILDINGS (EB)

Consistent with Public Law 103-227, 20 USC 6083, the Lowndes County School Board bans the use of all tobacco products in school buildings, on school property, and in school vehicles by all persons at all times. This ban extends to employees, students, and patrons attending school-sponsored athletic events/meetings and to all school-owned or operated vehicles and facilities.

ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act of 1986 (AHERA) requires the inspection of all buildings in the school district for asbestos. The district has complied with this act. A management plan documenting these inspections is on file for public review. Upon request, this plan may be viewed in the Superintendent's office.

The asbestos identified in the management plan will be checked regularly by a licensed asbestos company and by Lowndes County School District staff to scrutinize any changes in the material which could cause a health hazard. Asbestos will be monitored according to EPA guidelines. If changes occur, the asbestos coordinator will notify the appropriate people as prescribed by

GENERAL DISTRICT INFORMATION



Board Approved 1/13/25

2025 - 2026 Academic Calendar

JULY 2025 — T- 10 S-6

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

AUGUST 2025 — T-21 S-21

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

SEPTEMBER 2025 — T-19 S-19

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

OCTOBER 2025 — T-15 S-15

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER 2025 — T-15 S-15

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

DECEMBER 2025 — T-15 S-15

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	*19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**Dec 19 - 60%*

Student Days - 180

Jul 24 - Students Return
Sept 1 - Labor Day
Sept 29 - Oct 3 - Fall Intersession
Oct 6 - 10 - Fall Break
Nov 24 - 28 Thanksgiving Break
Dec 22 -26 Christmas Break
Dec 29 - Jan 5 New Year's Holiday
Jan 6 - Students Return
Jan 19 - Martin Luther King Holiday
Feb 16 - President's Day
Mar 9 - 13 - Spring Intersession
Mar 16 - 20 Spring Break
Apr 3 - Good Friday
May 25 - Memorial Day
May 28 - Students' Last Day/60% Day

Teacher Days - 187

Jul 16 - 18: Workday Assigned by Principal
Jul 21 - Teachers Return
Sept 1 - Labor Day
Sept 29 - Oct 3 - Intersession
Oct 6 - 10 - Fall Break
Nov 24 - 28 - Thanksgiving Break
Dec 22 - 26 - Christmas Break
Dec 29 - Jan 2 - New Year's Holiday
Jan 5 - Teacher Workday
Jan 19 - Martin Luther King Holiday
Feb 16 - Teacher Workday
Mar 9 - 13 - Intersession
Mar 16 - 20 Spring Break
Apr 3 - Good Friday
May 25 - Memorial Day
May 29 - Teachers' Last Day

Grading Terms

Jul 24 - Oct 3 - 1st 9 Weeks
Oct 13 - Dec 19 - 2nd 9 Weeks
Jan 6 - Mar 13 - 3rd 9 Weeks
Mar 23 - May 28 - 4th 9 Weeks

Grading Reports

Progress Reports
Aug 28 - 1st 9 Weeks
Nov 13 - 2nd 9 Weeks
Feb 5 - 3rd 9 Weeks
Apr 23 - 4th 9 Weeks
Report Cards
Oct 16 - 1st 9 Weeks
Jan 8 - 2nd 9 Weeks
Mar 26 - 3rd 9 Weeks
Jun 4 - 4th 9 Weeks

JANUARY 2026 — T-19 S-18

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY 2026 — T-20 S-19

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH 2026 — T-12 S-12

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

APRIL 2026 — T-21 S-21

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

MAY 2026 — T-20 S-19

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	*28	29	30
31	*May 28 - 60%					

JUNE 2026 — T-0 S-0

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

SCHOOL DAY (AE)

The school day must provide at least 330 minutes of instruction per day. Two 60% days per year are also allowed.

School officials will not be held responsible for students on school campuses prior to the beginning of the school day or after school is dismissed unless they are under the direct supervision of an authorized adult.

No school in the district will participate in activities that require any student to miss more than 20 class periods in courses for which grades and/or units of credit are issued during the school year.

Instruction is the primary focus of the school day. Please help us keep interruptions to a minimum so that students receive the maximum amount of instructional time.

School	Doors Open to Students	Students		
		Start	Tardy	Dismiss
CES	7:00	7:50	8:00	2:50
CMS	7:15	7:40	7:40	3:00
CHS	7:15	7:36	7:40	3:00
NHLE	7:15	7:50	7:50	2:50
NHUE	7:15	7:50	7:50	2:50
NHMS	7:20	7:40	7:40	3:00
NHHS	7:10	7:40	7:40	3:05
WLES	7:05	7:45	7:45	2:50
WLHS	7:10	7:34	7:38	3:15
ALT	7:20			
CTC	7:30	7:45	7:45	

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Principals and teachers will conduct drills to prepare students for emergencies. **D**rills will be conducted as designated by the state department of education.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The superintendent is hereby authorized to close schools and offices or dismiss them early in the event of natural disaster, inclement weather or other emergencies which threaten the safety or health of students or staff members. The superintendent will take such action only after consultation with transportation, emergency management, and weather authorities. The superintendent shall notify the school board of the decision to close the schools. Parents, students, and staff members shall be informed how they shall be notified in the event of emergency closings, early dismissals, or delayed start. Principals/directors are to notify the Superintendent's office when after-school programs are being canceled.

Information on district closings or altered schedules will be announced through our parent communication platform via email, text message and/or phone call. We will also post notices on the district's social media accounts. No announcement means schools will operate on a normal schedule.

EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

In case of a severe weather alert, such as a tornado, hurricane, or snow/ice warning being issued by the National Weather Service, the superintendent of schools or designee shall notify each principal and necessary administrator.

Children will be retained in the school buildings until it is deemed safe to dismiss them.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT (LA)

Parental support adds to the effectiveness of the educational process of the Lowndes County School District. Parents are urged to assist with school programs and to respond to surveys and other requests for input. Parents should notify the school office when their addresses, telephone numbers, place of work, and/or work telephone numbers change. It is extremely important that parents can be reached at all times in case of an emergency.

PARENT CONFERENCES/VISITS

VISITORS

- Parents, friends, solicitors, and any other visitors coming onto any campus or into any building for any reason must first obtain permission from the principal or school office personnel to visit or make personal contact with students or teachers. Visitors will be issued a visitor's pass only after being approved. No classroom visits or observations are allowed during instructional time without prior permission from the building level principal with the teacher's knowledge.
- Staff members shall routinely check with visitors to confirm that visitation has been granted. A visitor's pass issued by the office must be visible at all times. If permission has not been secured, the staff will immediately notify the office.

PARENT CONFERENCES

- Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in their child's education. Parents are welcome to make an appointment through the teacher, counselor, or principal prior to a visit or conference with a teacher.

CEREMONIES, DIPLOMAS, AND CERTIFICATES (IHF)

1. The time/date of high school graduation is set by the superintendent and approved by the Board. There is no middle school graduation.
2. Participation in formal graduation ceremonies is limited to senior students who have successfully completed prescribed secondary school graduation requirements.
3. Preparation for graduation ceremonies is scheduled in such a manner that graduating seniors are not absent from classes for more than three days prior to graduation.
4. This district will not give a diploma, or any substitute for a diploma, signed or unsigned, to a student who fails to meet the requirements for graduation.
5. Students who have satisfactorily completed the district's secondary curriculum for special education may be awarded a high-school certificate or a diploma stating, "This student has successfully completed an

Individualized Education Program." This student may be permitted to participate in graduation exercises. A copy of the parent information letter and the graduation policy provided to the parent and student prior to the IEP committee meeting must be sent to the parent with the applicable written prior notice.

6. Students who complete requirements for GED are not allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies.

INTERNET / NETWORK ACCEPTABLE USE (IJA)

Use of the Lowndes County School District's network shall be solely for the purpose of facilitating the exchange of information for this district in the furtherance of education, research, and job-related activities. The network also supports the educational and instructional endeavors of students and employees of the Lowndes County School District.

The Lowndes County School District's network is a complex system of components structured to perform specific functions within the district. The network system requires centralized management to ensure seamless operation; consequently, no user shall be allowed to attach any peripheral to the network without prior written permission. This includes, but is not limited to, hubs/switches, network storage devices, network printers, servers of any kind, and computers not owned by this district.

Anyone who uses the Lowndes County School District network must also abide by the guidelines established in COPPA and CIPA. CIPA (Child Internet Protection Act 2000) states that filtering services will be utilized on all computers accessing the Internet in the Lowndes County School District. COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act 1998) states that users will not disclose, use, disseminate, or give personal and/or private information about himself/herself, minors, or any other persons. In accordance, this district will provide filtering software for every Internet accessible computer, and no employee shall disclose personal information about students on the district or school websites.

The following are examples of other inappropriate activities related to The Lowndes County School District's network, e-mail system, and the Internet. Failure to abide by any of the district's Internet / network "acceptable use" regulations shall result in suspension of the Internet and email account. Violations are not limited to those listed below:

- Downloading, installing, or copying software of any kind onto a workstation or any network drive without approval of district technology personnel.
- Violating copyright laws.
- Damaging computer systems or computer networks. (This includes changing workstation configurations such as printers, BIOS information, passwords, etc.)
- Accessing inappropriate web sites (sites containing information that is violent, illegal, sexual, etc.).
- Plagiarism of materials that are found on the Internet.
- Sharing passwords.
- Broadcasting network messages by participating or sending chain mail.
- Intentionally wasting limited resources such as disk space and printing capacity.
- Listening to radio or television broadcasting on the Internet.
- Using school technology to harm or intent to harm another person.

Any violation of these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

All users should realize when they use the Internet, they enter a global world, and any actions taken by them will reflect upon the Lowndes County School District as a whole. As such, all users must behave in an ethical and legal manner and abide by the netiquette rules of network.

Each student utilizing the Internet and his/her parent shall sign the district's "Internet/Network Usage Agreement Form" before being allowed to use the Internet or network. All employees and community guests must also sign the district's applicable form before using the Internet or network.

The Lowndes County School District's Board of Trustees has implemented the 1:1 Digital Learning Initiative, called Engaged Learning Initiative (ELI), an innovative plan focused on enhancing academic learning through new technology resources. As such, the district provides its students and staff access to a variety of technological resources, including laptops, MacBook, and IPads.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines and regulations regarding the safe, legal, considerate and responsible use of this technology, as well as all technological resources utilized by students, staff, parents, and volunteers of the Lowndes County School District. All Lowndes County School District technological resources and information stored on the devices are governed by district policies and are subject to school supervision and inspection. This policy applies regardless of whether such use occurs on or off school district property, and it applies to all school district technological resources, including but not limited to computer networks and connections, the resources, tools and learning environments made available by or on the networks and all devices that connect to those networks.

The Lowndes County School District reserves the right to monitor, access, retrieve, read and disclose all messages, information, and files which have been created, sent, posted from, stored on, or utilized by its technological resources to law enforcement officials and others without prior notice. Any individual who violates this policy or any applicable local, state or federal laws is subject to disciplinary action, a loss of technology privileges and may face legal action.

FIELD/ACTIVITY TRIPS (IFCB)

The Board of Education of the Lowndes County School District recognizes that carefully planned and well-coordinated field trips or extra-curricular events can enrich and enhance the educational experience for students. Only those field trips and extra-curricular events which are of value in meeting educational objective and do not seriously interfere with the educational routine of students who must remain in school will be approved.

All field trips and extracurricular activity trips must be under the supervision of a teacher or responsible staff member. All trips must be pre-approved by the principal and the superintendent. Interstate (between two or more states) trips having a one-way destination of 100 miles must also be pre-approved by the School Board. Requests for such trips must be submitted for approval at least 30 calendar days prior to the trip.

The following guidelines shall apply to all field trips and extracurricular events:

1. All Field trips and extra-curricular events must first be approved by the school principal. Field trips must then be approved by the superintendent by submitting a Field Trip Request Form.
2. School buses or commercial buses should be used as much as possible. The principal must approve the use of private vehicles. All private vehicle drivers must be a parent/guardian or staff member, have a valid driver's license, and have valid documentation of vehicle insurance. Parents/Guardians of all students who will ride in the private vehicle shall give written permission.
3. When away from the school on a field trip/ extracurricular event student can only be released to a parent/guardian. This means students must return to school by the same means of transportation unless signed out in person by a parent/guardian.

4. Student attendance must be accounted for at all times. The chaperone or coach should have a list of students and parent/guardians' numbers in case of emergency.
5. Prior to departure all students must submit a signed parent consent form to the staff member who is in charge of the trip. For students involved in extracurricular activities, all information must be complete in the athletic/activity management system.
6. Costs incurred must come from the school's instructional budget, activity budget, and/or the appropriate department's budget and/or the students will assume the entire or partial costs of the field trip when the trip has not been included in the district or school budget. All student fees shall be collected prior to departure.

SCHOOL DELIVERIES/ FUNDRAISING (JK)

Only school-sponsored fund-raising items may be sold at school. **Such items may not be delivered to the school, except on Valentine's Day. If floral arrangements or other gifts are delivered to the school on Valentine's Day, all items will be kept in the office until the end of the day when students will be called to pick up gifts**. Any gifts brought in by students for other students will be sent to the office until the end of the day. Delivery of balloons or candy will not be accepted.

The Lowndes County School District is not responsible for lost or damaged gift items. Parents of bus students must pick up students who receive gifts, as flowers and gifts cannot be transported home by bus.

Students are not permitted to sell or distribute items on school property for personal profit.

ELEMENTARY PARTIES

Elementary parties will be limited to only those pre-approved by the building principal. Recess time will be utilized for the parties. Birthday parties for students and/or teachers are not allowed. However, parents may send refreshments for everyone to enjoy at recess.

ENROLLMENT

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS (JBC)

1. A **certified copy** of the child's birth certificate is **required** of all students entering the Lowndes County School District for the first time (Pre-K, K, 1, or students coming in from other districts).
2. A student must be enrolled by the parent or legal guardian who lives within the school district and must be entered under the student's full, legal name. Per Chapter 68: Residency Verification of the Mississippi Code, the student physically resides full time, weekdays/nights and weekends at a place of abode located within the limits of the school district.
3. If a student is enrolled by a legal guardian, a copy of the court order granting guardianship must be retained by the principal in the child's permanent record.
4. If no birth certificate is presented at the time of enrollment, a fee will be charged and the school will request the certificate from the state. The student will then be allowed to enroll.

5. All students, regardless of grade, must have a Mississippi Certificate of Compliance. This may be secured from the Lowndes County Health Department or from a family doctor.
6. Transfer students must show a withdrawal form and report card from the school previously attended.
7. Any student entering this district from home schooling (or a program not accredited by a state or regional agency) will be given a standardized achievement test to determine the grade or class to which the student is assigned. Accountability Standards prohibits the Lowndes County School District from awarding Carnegie units for home schooling or attendance at non-accredited schools.
8. The Lowndes County School District will accept foreign exchange students for one year only, and the student cannot be a graduating senior.
9. All new and returning students must provide the school with two current forms of residency verification. This information must also be provided when there is a change of residence.

   Acceptable documents are the following in grades Pre-K – 12th:

   - Filed homestead exemption application form
   - Mortgage documents or property deed
   - Apartment or home lease. Proven forged lease documents will be turned over to law enforcement.
   - Affidavit of residency and/or personal visit by a designated school district official. Affidavits are to be updated quarterly throughout the year. Failure to provide an updated affidavit will result in the student being withdrawn from the school.
     - Affidavits should have a copy of the lease, mortgage document, or property deed as proof.
     - The person providing the residence should accompany the parent/guardian to notarize the affidavit at the student's school.
     - In addition, the custodial parent(s) will present three of the items below: Doctor's or dentist's bill, Bank Statement, Credit Card Statement, Hospital bill, Cell phone bill, Insurance policy, State or Federal benefit check, Salary check stub, IRS Documentation, Other residency documentation approved by LCSD administration.
   - Utility bills (current within at least thirty days)
   - Certified copy of filed petition for guardianship if pending and final decree when granted
   - Any other documentation that will objectively and unequivocally establish that the parent or guardian resides within the school district

Any document with a post office box as an address will not be accepted.

A certified copy of the filed petition for guardianship and/or final decree must be presented if a student lives with a legal guardian in the school district.

Students are required to provide 2 proofs of residency each year they attend school.

School Administrators have the right to request updated proofs at any point during the school year if there is reasonable suspicion that a student is living outside the school's residential boundary.

PRE-K, KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

- To be eligible for Pre-kindergarten, a student must be 4 years old on or before September 1st of the enrolling school year.
- To be eligible for kindergarten, a student must be 5 years old on or before September 1st of the enrolling school year.
- To be eligible for the first grade, he/she must be 6 years old on or before September 1st of that school year.

Title I Pre-Kindergarten requires an application and selection process. The application process begins in the spring of each school year.

HOME SCHOOL ADMISSION/TRANSFER STUDENT TESTING (JBCD)

The Lowndes County School District will not give Carnegie units, upon transfer request only, for subjects taught in a tutorial, correspondence, private school, or home study program not accredited regionally or by a State Board of Education.

To receive a Carnegie unit for a course taught in a non-accredited correspondence, tutorial, private school, or home study program, a student entering this school district must pass a comprehensive, teacher made, special subject test with 60% proficiency. The examination will be given within thirty (30) days of the transfer request. The applicant will be notified of the administration date of such test no less than five (5) days prior to the test date.
The comprehensive examination will consist of questions based on the competencies and objectives in the Mississippi Curriculum Framework in the specific discipline area. If a student passes the comprehensive exam they will receive the grade awarded from the transfer school.
A separate examination must be passed for each transfer course whereby a Carnegie unit is being requested. Each examination will be administered only one time. If the student does not pass the exam, he/she must retake and pass the entire course to receive the Carnegie unit.

K-8 students seeking to transfer from a non-accredited school (public or private) or a home school program within or outside Mississippi to this district shall be required to take a test(s) to determine the grade/class to which he/she will be assigned. The test(s) will be given within thirty (30) days of the transfer request, and the applicant will be notified no less than five (5) days prior to the test's administration. No transfer shall be effective until the test(s) has been given and the student has been assigned to the grade/class for which he/she is best suited.

ADMISSION OF ENGLISH LEARNERS (IK)

Lowndes County Schools shall enroll without delay English Learners.

Lowndes County Schools shall enroll English Learners pending immunization records if they are not presented at the time of enrollment. Parents/guardians will have a thirty (30) day grace period from the day of enrollment to present documentation. Every attempt will be made to assist the family in procuring these documents.

WITHDRAWAL OR TRANSFER PROCEDURE (JBCD)

1. The student cannot be withdrawn without parent/guardian being present. Exceptions only with principal's approval.
2. The student must have appropriate forms completed by his/her guardian and teachers, return all school books and property, and make sure all fees are paid.
3. The principal or counselor must give the student final clearance.

The student's cumulative record will be sent to his/her new school upon receipt of notification that the student is enrolling in that institution.

ATTENDANCE

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (JBA)

COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE CHILD

"Compulsory-school-age child" means a child who has attained or will attain the age of six (6) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year and who has not attained the age of seventeen (17) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year; and shall include any child who has attained or will attain the age of five (5) years on or before September 1 and has enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program. 37-13-91 (2)(f)

Compulsory-school-age children must be enrolled in school unless the child is:

1. Physically, mentally or emotionally incapable of attending school as determined by the appropriate school official based upon sufficient medical documentation;
2. Enrolled in and pursuing a course of special education, remedial education or education for handicapped or physically or mentally disadvantaged children; or
3. Being educated in a legitimate home instruction program. 37-13-91 (3)

ABSENCES (JBD)

Each student shall attend school a minimum of 160 days during the school year in order to receive academic credit for that year of course work. Students shall not exceed ten (10) absences in a semester class or 20 absences in a yearly course. An absence is defined as having missed 37% of the student's instructional day (lunch, recess and breaks are not considered instructional time). Absences will also be recorded on the report cards (see Compulsory School Attendance). An "unlawful absence" (MSIS Policy) is a school-day absence by a compulsory-age child that is not a valid excuse for temporary non-attendance according to the Compulsory Attendance law of the State of Mississippi.

Absences will be monitored by the school-level attendance committee. If a student exceeds 20 absences in a yearly course or 10 absences in a one credit course on the block schedule or 5 in a ½ credit course on the block schedule, the attendance committee will review all documentation regarding the student's attendance record. The committee will then make a recommendation to the superintendent to either promote or retain the student.

In accordance with the Lowndes County School District Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) attendance policy, written documentation of excused absences will be kept on file in the school office for one year to maintain MSIS compliance.

A parent note may excuse up to 2 consecutive days. On the third day missed, a doctor's excuse will be required or a 2nd parent note can be written. Only four absences can be excused each semester with a parent note. All other absences must have medical or legal documentation to be excused. Students will have five days from the day they return to provide an excuse to the office. After five days the absence(s) will be deemed unexcused and only be changed through administrative acceptance of medical documentation.

The only way a student may be eligible for promotion if violating this rule is for him/her to present a physician's written medical verification of the long-term illness on <u>the day he/she returns to school.</u> The student, along with a parent or guardian, must appear before the board to request a waiver of the absentee policy.

During the school year, a student will not be allowed more than five planned absences (extracurricular school activities) in the same class period in courses for which grades and/or units of credit are given. A student will not be allowed to miss more than twenty class periods for planned absences. Principals will identify those absences which are classified as "planned absences."

Offenses that carry out-of-school suspension will not count against state compulsory attendance.

Students may elect to attend Extended School (if offered) to complete credit recovery to earn credits.

MAKE-UP WORK (JBD)

All work must be made up for any absence. Make-up work is the responsibility of the student. Work must be made up within a reasonable period of time, as defined by the teacher. If the student has an extended illness, he/she (or parents or guardian) must obtain assignments from the school and makeup work weekly.

Make-up work should take approximately the same amount of time as the time missed from class. Only in extreme cases of prolonged absence will students be given more than one week to make up work unless permission is granted by the principal. A day's absence does not excuse a student from responsibility for all assignments on the day of his/her return. A grade of zero will be recorded if the work is not made up.

It is the student's responsibility to obtain all make-up work from his/her teachers on the day of his/her return.

CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES (JBDA)

Teachers and administrators always encourage students to stay in school. When students miss class, they lose academic time. Administrators will use their discretion in verifying notes and reasons for release. If an emergency does develop, these checkout procedures will be followed:

1. A student must be signed out in the office by a parent, guardian, or a documented designee before the student can leave the school grounds. High school students will be allowed to sign out with a note signed by a parent and verified by telephone.

2. Parents or anyone so designated by a parent/guardian must show a picture identification when signing out a student.

3. Checking students out before the dismissal bell on a daily basis should be avoided for it may adversely affect the student's academic standing.
4. Students will not be allowed to call home to check out except in an emergency.

5. Students may not leave the school campus without permission from an administrator or the school Counselor.

6. Medical and dental appointments should be scheduled after school hours. If this is impossible, they should not be scheduled consistently at the same time.

7. Students must leave campus promptly at the approved dismissal time. Any student in violation of this policy will be subject to administrative disciplinary action and may lose the privilege for future dismissals. Students are not allowed to remain on campus if they are not assigned to classes or other school related activities.

8. Parents are encouraged not to check out their child during a severe weather warning. This puts the students in a dangerous situation unnecessarily.

9. Any student who checks out must report to the office immediately upon return to the campus.

Failure to follow any of these procedures may result in disciplinary action.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

CHILD NUTRITION

CAFETERIA

Students enrolled in Lowndes County School District at the end of the previous school year will continue to eat with the same status of free, reduced, or paid as they did in May of the previous year up to 30 days or until the new application is processed. Students who do not turn in a current application to be processed will be changed to "paid" at the end of the 30 days.

New students to the district with older siblings who were enrolled the previous school year, eat with the same status as those siblings until the new application is processed or the 30 day period is up.

Student who transfer from another school district must submit an application and parents/guardians are responsible for the cost of meals until applications are approved. Efforts will be made to process new applications within 10 days of receipt in the Child Nutrition Office. Due to the large number of applications received at the beginning of school this process could take longer.

Parents may submit a paper application or an electronic application at www.myschoolapps.com. Online applications are processed first.

Parents are encouraged to make advance payments for student meals and a la carte items. Parents may deposit any amount but are encouraged to pay weekly, monthly, or yearly. Parents may send cash but are encouraged to pay by check or create an online account at www.myschoolbucks.com.

From the online payment service at www.myschoolbucks.com parents may:

- Deposit money for student meals online anytime
- Sign up for automatic low balance email alerts
- View account balances
- View recent purchase history
- Download the mobile app

Breakfast and Lunch Fees:

Student Breakfast	$1.00
Student Lunch	$2.75
Adult Breakfast	$2.75
Adult Lunch	$4.50

Classroom/Food Services Compliance Rules

All parents/guardians shall adhere to the Lowndes County School District's established Wellness Policies pertaining to student's healthy environment and safe schools. These rules state that any foods prepared off-school campus

and/or from non-state purchasing approved vendors are not allowed in the student classroom or school cafeteria. Additionally, all carbonated soft drink beverages packed with student bag lunches must have a container with no visible soft drink label. For example, "Coca Cola" and "Pepsi" products are not allowed in the cafeteria dining hall during breakfast/lunch meal services. Additionally, no glass bottles are allowed.

Any food served to the student by vendors/outside retail merchants, or any other food-carryout retail business during the school day (7am-4pm) without the District's Superintendent or the School Food Service Authority approval is not allowed. (These standards do not apply to the school district's approved vending machines or school approved snack sales). Parents/guardians are asked not to bring other vendor prepared food to the classroom or dining hall during the school day.

No food items, except cafeteria food, will be sold from one hour before the beginning of the first lunch period until the end of the last lunch period.

Students must comply with the following cafeteria rules:

1. All lunch litter must be deposited in wastebaskets.
2. All trays and utensils must be returned to the dishwashing area.
3. Tables and floors around the seats must be left in clean condition for others.

Note: **Disciplinary action will be taken for improper conduct (breaking cafeteria rules).**

LIBRARY SERVICES (IFBD)

Each school has a library-media center with an organized collection of materials and equipment that represents a broad range of current learning media, including instructional technology.
The library staff offers an organized program of service to students and staff by providing access to the materials and equipment, by providing training/instruction in the use of materials/equipment, and by working with teachers and other staff members to design/provide learning activities for the students.

INSTRUCTIONAL INTERVENTION (IEI)

The LCSD will provide general education support services and alternative instructional approaches, as well as appropriate intervention strategies to address a student's performance prior to a referral of a student for an evaluation to determine the need for special education services. The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) requires each school to design an instructional model to meet the needs of every student. The model must consist of three tiers of instruction: Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3. The school principal will ensure that all staff is familiar with intervention procedures and the procedures for operating a Teacher Support Team (TST) for the three tiers of instruction.

INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Lowndes County School District (LCSD) will provide a Gifted Education Program (GEP) for intellectually gifted students in grades two through eight in all schools. The LCSD program for intellectually gifted students is known as MERIT (Managing Educational Resources of the Intellectually Talented). Eligible students in grades 2-8 will receive a minimum of four hours of gifted education per week.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IDDF)

The Mississippi Department of Education shall establish goals for the performance of children with disabilities that will promote the purpose of IDEA and are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards for children established by the Mississippi Department of Education.

The educational programs and services provided for exceptional children shall be designed to provide individualized appropriate special education and related services that enable a child to reach his/her appropriate and uniquely designed goals for success.

A Section 504 Coordinator is responsible for ensuring a school or organization complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination based on disability. This person implements policies, procedures, and safeguards to prevent discrimination and ensure equal access for individuals with disabilities. The Lowndes County School District has designated Dr. Rhonda Locke, 1053 Hwy 45 South, Columbus, MS, 39701, (662-244 -5024) to handle inquiries regarding Section 504.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Please see the Lowndes County School District Alternative School Handbook.

DUAL ENROLLMENT/DUAL CREDIT

Mississippi Code of 1972: 37-15-38 established dual enrollment and dual credit programs for high school and postsecondary credit. The purpose of the Dual Enrollment and Credit Program is to offer structured opportunities for qualified high school students to simultaneously enroll in college courses at Mississippi (public) Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) or Mississippi Community or Junior Colleges (CJCs) that provide pathways leading to academic or career technical postsecondary credit.

A dual enrolled student is a student who is enrolled in a community college or state institution of higher learning while enrolled in high school. The student receives postsecondary credit for coursework.

A dual credit student is a student who is enrolled in a community college or state institution of higher learning while enrolled in high school. The student receives both high school and postsecondary credit for coursework regardless of the course location (high school campus, postsecondary campus, or online). One three-hour postsecondary course is equal to one high school Carnegie unit. Four-hour postsecondary lab science course(s), either in a four-hour combined format or three-hour lecture plus one-hour matching lab format, is equal to one high school Carnegie unit.

Lowndes County School District encourages high school juniors and seniors to enroll in college courses. Students who wish to enroll in college classes should contact their principal or counselor. The current Procedures Manual for the State of Mississippi Dual Enrollment and Accelerated Programs will be followed.

Eligibility requirements:

1. Junior or Senior status
2. 3.0 GPA (2.0 GPA for CTE)
3. Parent responsibility for fees and transportation
4. Unconditional permission granted by school administrators and/or counselors

Students must earn a C or better in the college course to receive high school credit for the class.

Students must take a minimum of five AP classes and/or Dual Credit courses and have an overall combined average in those classes of a 90 GPA or a 3.5 QPA to earn a silver cord at graduation.

PRE-K PROGRAM

Lowndes County School District is committed to building a strong foundation for all students to be successful learners. Our mission is to provide a highly effective Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program that serves 4-year-old students in each elementary school. Our Pre-K program implements the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines and Standards for Classrooms serving Four-Year-Old Children. Students will be assessed using the Mississippi Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (MKAS) and Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Screener (Brigance).

Our Pre-K program is part of the Mississippi Early Learning Collaborative (ELC) Program. The Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013 allows for the formation of collaboratives across the state of Mississippi. The Lowndes County Early Learning Collaborative (LCSD ELC) was awarded in 2022 and is one of collaboratives across the state funded by the Mississippi Department of Education

Career Technical Center

The Lowndes County School District is committed to providing a quality program of Vocational/Career Technical Education and shall adhere to applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. Students who participate in the vocational/career technical program shall be required to complete all curriculum requirements for completion/graduation, as defined by the State Board of Education. These students shall be afforded the opportunity to dually enroll in a community or technical college or to participate in a business internship or work-study program, when such opportunities are available and appropriate.

School Counselors

The district's school counseling program is part of the total educational process. School counselors hold the philosophy that all individuals are important, that they are responsible for their own behavior, and that they can plan for their future when given specific assistance. School Counseling services are available in each school. School Counselors may assist students with personal, educational, or vocational needs.

MIDDLE AND HIGH-SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (JT)

The selection and participation in extracurricular activities are privileges, rather than rights, afforded to individual students. With privilege comes responsibility. Those who are selected represent the entire school and are expected to conduct themselves in a way that reflects favorably upon the school. These awards, honors, and recognition shall not be based upon race, color, or national origin.

All Lowndes County School Board policies and handbook rules are in effect on school district approved field trips and at all school-approved functions and practice sessions.

The Lowndes County School District enforces the following strict rules governing who may be eligible for try-outs and what policies must be adhered to during the period of participation:

1. For a student to be eligible to participate in athletics, band, chorus, dance, cheerleading, and other extracurricular activities, he/she must earn a total of five (5) credits from the previous year, follow an approved course of study towards graduation and meet all MHSAA eligibility requirements.

2. At a minimum, students must have passed all subjects the previous semester, have an overall average of **70**, have no out-of-school suspensions, and have no criminal offense convictions (except for minor traffic offenses) to be eligible for the following:

    a. Homecoming court and escorts
    b. Student government positions
    c. Class officers
    d. Mr. or Miss (School)
    e. Most Likely to Succeed
    f. Batgirls
    g. Who's Who
    h. Most Beautiful or Most Handsome
    i. Senior Superlatives

3. Students who are diploma candidates and who are passing all subjects with a minimum overall cumulative average of **92** are eligible for membership in National Honor Society, if applicable.

4. The cheerleading guidelines are described in the Lowndes County School District Cheerleading Manual. Potential candidates may see the cheerleader sponsor and/or athletic director for details.

5. School accident insurance is available at a nominal cost. When a student insured under this plan is injured, he/she will be given a claim form from the office. The form must be completed by the parents and presented to the doctor or hospital. The school merely acts as a median in supplying the insurance and assumes no liability either for the injury or negotiations with the company.

6. All students participating in extracurricular activities, which require trips away from school, shall play, or scrimmage without such insurance; however, a signed affidavit from the parents stating the student has other adequate accident coverage may be used to waive the requirement.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Parents have the right to request the qualifications of teachers and paraprofessionals. Parents will be notified if a non-qualified teacher will be teaching their child for four or more consecutive weeks.

GRADING (IHA)

In kindergarten, a skills checklist is used to measure progress. A parent/teacher conference is scheduled as needed during the year but is also required second semester for any student not mastering the kindergarten skills checklist. Only the final average will be considered for promotion to first grade.

In grades 1-12, A, B, C, and D are passing. A indicates exceptionally fine work; B represents better than average work; C indicates average work; D indicates poor work. A grade of F indicates failure. The grade given at the end of the semester is a cumulative grade for that semester and is the one that is recorded. The numerical equivalent is given below.

Elementary Grading Scale (Grades K-5)

- A = 90 -100
- B = 80 - 89
- C = 70 - 79
- D = 65 - 69
- F = 64 or below

Middle and High School Grading Scale (Grades 6-12)

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 59 or below

Grading Options

Grade Type	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E	Option F
Test grades (T) (chapters tests, unit tests, projects, research, summative assessments)	50%	60%	45%	60%	* See below	* See below
Daily grades (D) (quizzes, classwork, project check-points, formative assessments)	30%	30%	35%	40%	* See below	* See below
Other (O) (Homework, participation, Bell work)	20%	10%	20%		* See below	* See below

* Option E – Each assignment is assigned a point value by the teacher based on the rigor of the assignment. The final grade will be determined by the percent of possible points earned.
*Option F – All assignments will carry the same weight.

EXAMS

Term exams will count 1/5 of the term average.

Semester 1 averages will be calculated by averaging Term 1 and Term 2 together. Semester 2 averages will be calculated by averaging Term 3 and Term 4 together.

The final average for yearlong classes shall be obtained by averaging the two semester averages.

The term and final average, in courses that receive academic credit, will be rounded to the nearest hundredth. Grades will not be rounded to the nearest whole number. (example: 96.48 = 96.48, **NOT** 96.5)

ADDITIONAL WEIGHT

Dual Credit/Advanced Placement, and honors classes~~,~~ will receive a weighted value at the end of each semester. Students in Advanced Placement/Dual Credit courses will receive a weighted value of 5%. Students in Honors courses will receive a weighted value of 3%.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

1. A schedule change is possible in terms of the student's existing schedule and the change will not overload a particular class.
2. The change results in a reasonable program of studies in terms of the established curriculum.
3. The change is not based on teacher preference.
4. Final approval is granted by the principal.
5. Removal from any AP or Honors classes must have written parent permission.

ELEMENTARY ACCELERATED READER

Accelerated Reader (AR) is a supplemental reading practice program where students read library books from a selected reading range according to each student's independent reading level. This level is determined by a combination of the STAR assessment, teacher professional judgment, and previous performance in the program. Point goals, which measure the amount of reading practice, are set according to the allotted practice time and the student's individual reading level.
Grades for AR make up 10% of the total periodic reading grade. One half of the AR grade comes from the comprehension grade or percent correct made on cumulative quizzes and the other half is derived from the percent of goal a student obtains. The remaining portion of the periodic reading grade (90%) pertains to the basic reading curriculum at the particular grade level.

PROMOTION/RETENTION (IHE)

Promotion and retention shall be based upon the mastery of objectives.

No student shall fail without supporting Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 documentation. Students in grades 3 through 5 who score Minimal on the Language Arts or Math portions of the State Assessment are referred to the school's Teacher Support Team (TST) as directed by the Mississippi Department of Education. The decision to retain a student can be made after the available information has been compiled, the TST has been involved, sufficient communication with parents/guardians has been conducted and principal approval has been received.

Students in 3rd grade are governed by the requirements of the Literacy Based Promotion Act of 2013.

High school students can participate in the credit recovery program to get back on track toward graduation. Students must complete an application for the credit recovery program. See high school counselors for more information.

Elementary

Kindergarten students will be promoted by recommendation of the teacher and the principal based on mastery of standards. Eight (8) out of the ten (10) target standards must be mastered at 85% for promotion to first grade. Target standards will be provided to parents by the principal.

First and second grade students will be promoted on mastery of Language Arts (Reading, English) and math standards at 65% proficiency.

Third, fourth, and fifth grade students will be promoted based on mastery of Language Arts (Reading, English), math, science, and social studies standards at 65% proficiency.

LITERACY BASED PROMOTION ACT PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION

As established by the Literacy Based Promotion Act of 2013, students will be promoted to 4th grade by earning a passing score (level 3 or above) in reading on the established state assessment for 3rd grade. If a K-3 student has been identified with a substantial reading deficit, the teacher will immediately and through quarterly progress reports, notify parents or legal guardians in writing the following information:

- A substantial deficit has been determined in reading
- A description of what student services and supports are presently being provided to the student
- A description of the proposed supplemental instruction and support to remediate the student's deficit areas
- Strategies that parents/legal guardians can use to help the student at home
- Notification that the student will not be promoted to the 4th grade if the reading deficiency cannot be remediated by the end of the 3rd grade

Middle School

Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students will be promoted based on passing all core courses attempted.

No student shall fail without supporting Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 documentation.

Students who have final class grades of 55 in ELA or math and score passing or above on the State Assessment will be promoted in those subject areas and will be given a grade equivalent to a 60.

High School

Ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students will be promoted based on earning the number of Carnegie units for each grade as indicated below:

- Sophomore – 6 units
- Junior – 12 units
- Senior – 18 units

All students must also pass the state-mandated end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, English II, Biology I, and U.S. History from 1877.

No student shall fail without supporting Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 documentation.

Students who have final class grades of 55 in the subjects of the end-of-course assessments and make passing scores on the MAAP will be given a unit of credit for the specific subject and a grade equivalent to a 60.

REMEDIATION

Any student who fails to master basic skills shall be provided with remediation through TST, classroom teachers, and supplemented by Title I services in eligible schools.

Students who have not passed subject area test(s) must be enrolled in a compensatory class or in an ACT prep class for the subject area test(s) in question.

EXEMPTION CRITERIA

Students may be exempt from final exams if they meet the criteria below. **Students with out-of-school suspension are ineligible for exemption.**

Yearlong Class Exemptions

- Grades 6 - 12
- Passing average with zero absences
- A – average
- B – average with no more than 5 absences
- No out-of-school suspensions

Semester/ Block Class Exemptions

- Grades 6 – 12
- Passing average with zero absences
- A – average
- B – average with no more than 5 absences
- No out-of-school suspensions

Half Credit Block (9-weeks) Class Exemptions

- Grades 9-12
- Passing average with zero absences
- A – average
- B – average with no more than 5 absences
- No out-of-school suspensions

Half Credit Semester Class Exemptions (middle school)

- Passing average with zero absences
- A-average
- B – average with no more than 5 absences
- No out-of-school suspensions

REPORT CARDS (IHA)

Report cards are issued on the Thursday after the nine-week grading period. Numerals are used to designate a student's progress in grades K-12. Absences will be recorded on report cards. Parents are encouraged to set up a conference with the teacher if they would like to discuss their child's grades. Parents of elementary students must sign the report card and return it to the school the next day.

Students who make all A's in every subject taken each nine weeks will be on the ***Superintendent's List***. Students who make all A's and B's in every subject taken each nine weeks will be on the ***Principal's List***. These awards are to be based on quarterly grades and not yearly or term averages.

GRADING CHANGES

(1) No school board member, school superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, school counselor, other teachers, coaches, or other administrative staff members of the school or the central staff of a local school board shall attempt, directly or indirectly, to change, alter, or otherwise affect the grade received by a student from his/her teacher.

(2) (a) A teacher's determination of a student's grade as a measure of the academic achievement or proficiency of the student shall not be altered or changed in any manner by any school official or employee other than the teacher.

(b) A school official or employee having authority provided under formally adopted written rules and procedures adopted by the local school board to change a student's grade can take such action only upon it being determined that the grade is an error or that the grade is demonstrably inconsistent with the teacher's grading policy.

(3) Any local school district or personnel employed by the school district who violates the provisions of the laws shall cause the local school district or school to be subject to losing its accreditation in the manner determined by the policies and procedures of the State Board of Education.

The grading system shall be included in all student handbooks.

The superintendent or designee shall establish procedures to support this policy.

TEXTBOOKS (ICFA)

Students who lose or damage a book must pay.

Book fines will be assessed according to the following schedule:

Condition when issued	*Condition when returned*	*Amount of Fine*
N	E	None
N	G	20% of contract price
N	F	40% of contract price
N	P	60 % of contract price
E	G	None
E	F	20% of contract price
E	P	40% of contract price
G	F	None
G	P	20% of contract price

N – new; E – excellent; G – good; F – fair; P – poor

**** When books are lost, damaged beyond reading or repair, have missing pages, or have broken spines, the student will be assessed the full price of the book**.*

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Any student who completes the minimum number of Carnegie units ***and*** who has met the requirements for each of the required high school end of course assessments is eligible to receive a high school diploma. Students earning a traditional diploma may earn the following endorsements to be added to the traditional diploma: ***Career and Technical Endorsement, Academic Endorsement, and/or Distinguished Academic Endorsement***. Each graduation pathway is outlined in the Appendix of this handbook.

Diploma	**Minimum Units Required**
Traditional	24
Traditional + Career and Technical or JROTC Endorsement	26
Traditional + Academic Endorsement	26
Traditional + Distinguished Academic Endorsement	28

Additional Options in Lieu of Passing EOC Assessments

Each student receiving a standard diploma must earn a passing score on each of the required high school end of course assessments. Mississippi Admin. Code 7-3: 36.5, State Board Policy Chapter 36, Rule 36.5 provides approved options for students to meet high school end-of-course (EOC) assessment requirements for graduation through approved alternate measures. Mississippi Admin. Code 7-3: 36.5, State Board Policy Chapter 36, Rule 36.5, applies to past, current, and future graduates and allows a student to meet the graduation requirements once he or she has failed to pass any required end-of-course (EOC) assessment one (1) time.

The following graduation options provide opportunities for students to obtain a certain score or level on the ACT, ASVAB, ACT WorkKeys, MS-CPAS, or other state-approved industry certifications. Students also may obtain a grade of "C" or higher in a dual credit/dual enrollment course, corresponding to the EOC assessment that was not passed.

Notes:

- ACT sub-scores resulting from non-college reportable accommodations **can** be used for graduation options, but the scores are non-college reportable.
- ACT sub-scores resulting from Residual ACT Testing **cannot** be used for graduation options.
- This option is available regardless of when the student took the SATP2, PARCC, or MAP/MAAP assessments.
- The college credit option is only applicable if the student is enrolled in high school and college at the same time. Students must meet the dual enrollment/dual credit admissions requirements of the community college partnering with the school district.
- The Graduation Options listed in Appendix are applicable to any EOC assessment.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SENIOR EARLY RELEASE (LATE ARRIVAL)

Early release/late arrival is a term referring to the practice of allowing students who have earned most of their graduation credits to leave campus for part of their school day for work during their senior year.

A student must have met ACT sub scores 17 English and 19 Math or earned a Silver level on ACT Work Keys or SAT equivalency.

OR, a student must meet ALL of the following:

- Have a 2.5 GPA
- Passed or met all MAAP assessment requirements for graduation
- On track to meet diploma requirements
- Concurrently enrolled in Essentials for College Math or Essentials for College Literacy

Seniors must attend a minimum of two (2) blocks each semester except for 5th year seniors or those dually enrolled receiving dual credit.

EARLY GRADUATION

- Students who apply for early graduation must meet the same standards, including state testing requirements, as students who complete 4 years of high school.
- Early graduates are not eligible for honorary roles in the graduation ceremony.
- If the early graduation applicant fails to meet the requirements or withdraws the early graduation request/application, the student will be re-enrolled in the appropriate grade to complete graduation requirements.
- The deadline to submit early graduation applications for the current graduation year is August 5th.
- Applications will be reviewed by a committee comprised of the principal, school counselor, and three classroom teachers.
- Committee decisions will be submitted to the Superintendent for final approval.
- All applicants and their parent/guardian will receive written notification of the decision within 30 days of filing the application.

Requirements

- A cumulative GPA of at least 80*
- Completed application
- Written explanation of reason for requesting early graduation

CRITERIA FOR VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN
(Classes of 2026 and 2027)

Criteria for valedictorian and salutatorian will be based on cumulative GPA from IHL credit bearing classes.

Transfer students' grades that are letter, rather than numerical, will be averaged using the midpoint grade.
Students must complete at least three (3) advanced placement or dual credit courses during their high school career and have achieved the highest-grade point average of eligible students to be eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian.

Students graduating with a 94 or better cumulative average in the IHL core courses will graduate with high honors.

Students who earn at least a 90 cumulative average in all credit bearing classes will graduate with honors.

Dual credit/Advanced placement, honors classes, and higher-level classes will receive a weighted value at the end of each semester.

Students in Advanced Placement/Dual credit courses will receive a weighted value of 5%. Students in Honors courses will receive a weighted value of 3%.

Weighted courses to be used in computing class rank include Advanced Placement/Dual credit and Honors courses.

Every other class final average (with the exception of physical education and driver's education) will also be calculated to determine the final overall grade point average.

Fine Arts and Health are included as graduation requirements: therefore, grades in these subjects will be calculated in the student's GPA. This includes a half semester of physical education in the GPA since it is a graduation requirement.

Must complete last five (5) consecutive semesters at the school granting the diploma.

Dual Credit/Advanced Placement grade point averages used to determine valedictorian and salutatorian honors will be calculated based on final grades earned through the end of the fall semester (December) of the senior year. Grades earned after this point will not be included in the ranking for these distinctions.

CRITERIA FOR VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN
(Freshman of 2024 and after)

The final averages of all courses, except driver's education, will be calculated to determine the final overall grade point average. Physical education and Fine Arts will count only one (1) time.

Transfer students' grades that are letter, rather than numerical, will be averaged using the midpoint grade.

Students must complete at least three (3) advanced placement or dual credit courses during their high school career and have achieved the highest-grade point average of eligible students to be eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian.

Students graduating with a 94 or better cumulative average in the IHL core courses will graduate with high honors.

Students who earn at least a 90 cumulative average in all credit bearing classes will graduate with honors.

Dual Credit/Advanced Placement, honors classes, and higher-level classes will receive a weighted value at the end of each semester. Students in Advanced Placement/ Dual Credit courses will receive a weighted value of 5%. Students in honors courses will receive a weighted value of 3%.

Must complete the last five (5) consecutive semesters at the school granting the diploma.

Dual Credit/Advanced Placement grade point averages used to determine valedictorian and salutatorian honors will be calculated based on final grades earned through the end of the fall semester (December) of the senior year. Grades earned after this point will not be included in the ranking for these distinctions.

MISSISSIPPI SCHOLARS AND MISSISSIPPI TECH MASTER SCHOLARS

MS Scholars: The Mississippi Scholars Initiative is an education program managed by the Public Education Forum of Mississippi, which utilizes business leaders to motivate students to complete a rigorous course of study in high school. This course path gives students a boost – not just for college but for life. The mission is to encourage and motivate all high school students to complete a defined, rigorous academic course of study that prepares them for

successful transition to college, university coursework or vocational and technical training necessary to enter today's competitive job market. Please refer to the Mississippi Economic Council website for current information. https://msmec.com/propel-education-forum

MS Tech Master Scholars: The purpose is to develop a program under the Mississippi Scholars umbrella to encourage students to pursue and perform well in a tech-prep course of study, recognizing their achievements at graduation, as the Mississippi Scholars program currently recognizes those who pursue a college-bound course of study, with a particular emphasis on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Please refer to the Mississippi Economic Council website for current information. https://msmec.com/propel-education-forum

SPECIAL EDUCATION DIPLOMA OPTIONS

Only students identified by their Individualized Education Program Committee as having a significant cognitive disability, as defined by the current edition of Testing Students with Disabilities Regulations and Miss. Admin Code 7-3: 78.1, State Board Policy Chapter 78, Rule 78.1, may be eligible to earn the Alternate Diploma.

Each student who has completed the secondary curriculum for special education may be issued a special diploma or certificate of completion which states: "This student has successfully completed an Individualized Education Program." Special Education Diploma options listed in the Appendix.

STUDENT HEALTH.

The LCSD is committed to supporting student health and wellness. For detailed information on health services, medication policies, and illness protocols, please refer to the Student Health Handbook available on our website.

MEDICINES PROCEDURES

The following medicine procedures will be adhered to in the Lowndes County School District:

1. Parents must provide all medications to be given at school. Lowndes County Schools do not provide any medication for students.
2. In order for a student to take **ANY** medication (**including all over the counter medications, such as Tylenol or Advil)** at school, the parent must obtain a medication authorization form from the school nurse or school office, or print it from the school website, and have it completed and signed by the doctor. The parent must also sign the form and bring the completed form along with the medication to the school nurse.
3. **Parents should not send medication to school by the student.**
4. Prescription medication must be brought to school in the pharmacy labeled bottle, which contains instructions on how and when the medication is to be given. Over the counter medications must be in its original container.
5. The principal of each school will designate someone to administer all medication. The designee, if not the nurse, will be given instruction or training to insure he/she can safely administer the medications.
6. School personnel will follow the written direction of the student's physician in administering all medication.
7. Students are admonished and instructed not to bring any medication to school, including over the counter medications. Any student bringing medication to school and giving it to another student will be disciplined.
8. **For children known to have severe or life-threatening allergies [or serious medical conditions (seizures, diabetes, asthma etc., which require emergency medications)] parents should:**

a. Inform the school nurse and the child's teacher of their child's life threatening condition at the beginning of the school year, or as soon as possible after the diagnosis. All severe allergies must be verified by documentation from a Physician or Nurse Practitioner.
b. Complete and submit all required medication forms.
c. Provide the school with current cell phone, pager, etc. and maintain updated contact numbers and medical information.
d. Provide the school nurse with up-to-date emergency medication (including epinephrine, diastat, and glucagon), so they can be placed in all required locations for the current school year.
e. Provided epinephrine, diastat, glucagon or any other emergency medication on field trips.
f. Go on field trips with their children if possible. If a student has emergency medication for seizures, diabetes, or any other medical conditions that require close supervision, a parent or adult chosen by the parent will be required to accompany the child, or the child will not be able to attend the field trip.
g. Inform the school of any changes in the child's life-threatening allergy status.
h. Provide the school with physician's statement if the student no longer has life threatening allergies or other medical conditions.
i. For food allergies that may cause a need for the diet to be changed from the regular meal pattern in the cafeteria, a **Mississippi Department of Education Office of Child Nutrition Medical Statement** (for Non-Disabled or Disabled Child) should be completed by the student's Doctor at the beginning of the school year or as soon as diagnosed. The parent can obtain a copy of this form from the school nurse, the school office, or the school website.

All necessary permission slips, request forms, etc., must be signed before the above and foregoing policy and procedures are carried out in relation to administering any medication to the student. The Lowndes County School District will administer first aid and emergency treatment to insure the safety of its students.

ASTHMA MEDICATION POLICY (JGCDA)

A student with asthma may possess and use asthma medications when at school, at a school-sponsored activity, under the supervision of school personnel, or before and after normal school activities while on school properties (including school-sponsored child care or after-school programs). Each student must have an asthma action plan on file in the school. The School District shall incur no liability as a result of any injury sustained by the student from the self-administration of asthma medications.

ACCIDENTS/FIRST AID (JGFG)

The Lowndes County School District will administer first aid and emergency treatment to insure the safety of its students. In the event that a student needs medical attention and a parent or other designated person cannot be reached, an ambulance will be called at the parent's expense.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (JGCC)

It shall be unlawful for any student to attend school with a dangerous, contagious, or infectious disease. If a student becomes ill with an infectious disease at school, he/she will be immediately isolated until he/she can be taken home or picked up by the parent/guardian. Under no condition will the student be allowed to ride the bus home. In addition, the student will not be permitted to return to school without a permission slip from a doctor or health department official.

Once the school nurse or office personnel have attempted to contact a parent/guardian as listed in the student's emergency contact list, the parent/guardian is required to pick up the child within one hour. If no one can be contacted or if no one comes to pick up the child, Child Protective Services and/or Emergency 911 may be notified.

MEDICAL EXAM FOR ATHLETES (JGD)

Middle and high-school students wishing to participate in athletics must have a physical examination and receive certification from a physician stating that the student is in excellent health to participate in the athletic activity. This certification must be signed and dated by the physician and submitted to the principal. The physical examination must be during the current school year and must be submitted prior to practice or competition (MHSAA guidelines).

REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Any school employee having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is neglected or abused is required by Mississippi Code of 1972 (§43-21-353) to make an oral report immediately to the school principal/designated supervisor and by telephone or otherwise to the Department of Human Services (DHS). As soon as possible thereafter, a written report must be filed with DHS. Reports must contain the names and addresses of the child and parent or other persons responsible for the child's care. If known, the child's age, nature and extent of injuries, any evidence of previous injuries, and other information pertinent to establishing cause of the injury and identity of the perpetrator should be included in the report. Reports of abuse and neglect made under this law and the identity of the reporter are confidential except when the court in its discretion determines the testimony of the person reporting to be material to a judicial proceeding. A school employee makes a required report pursuant to this law is presumed to be acting in good faith. Any person acting in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. MS Code (§43-21-355)

STUDENT INSURANCE PROGRAM

Accident insurance, under a group policy, will be made available to all students. The School Board will select the company and the program. While participation is voluntary, parents are responsible for enrolling their child and paying any applicable premiums if they choose to participate in the program.

Middle and high-school students participating in interscholastic athletics are required to have accident insurance coverage. No student will be allowed to practice, play, or scrimmage without this insurance. This requirement may be waived by a signed affidavit from the parents stating that the student has adequate insurance coverage under the family's policy.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

STUDENT SUPPORT/PRIDE

The relationship of peers is very important to the success of students in school. Students should show they care for one another by following these acts of kindness:

1. Showing concern for others
2. Helping classmates with studies
3. Including classmates in group activities
4. Including classmates in after school activities (sports, etc.)
5. Relating personal experiences in a positive manner
6. Providing social interaction with one another

Students should also have pride in their school. Students should demonstrate this pride by:

1. Using the wastebasket, instead of littering the classrooms, halls, or campus
2. Helping keep the campus neat and clean by picking up paper and trash
3. Being courteous to fellow students, teachers, and guests
4. Being clean, well-mannered, helpful, and pleasant to others
5. Respecting school property and staff at all times

MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL SAFETY ACT OF 2001 (JCB)

The School Safety Act of 2001 is cumulative and in addition to the school district's existing authority regarding discipline of students. Pursuant to the Act, the school district has adopted policies and procedures that recognize the teacher as the authority in classroom matters regarding the school district's written discipline code of conduct. In the event a teacher removes a student who, in the professional judgment of the teacher, is disrupting the learning environment, and the removal is approved by the principal or assistant principal, the student may not return to the classroom until a conference is held with the student's parent, guardian, or custodian. During the conference, the disruptive behavior will be discussed and agreements reached that no further disruption will be tolerated. The conference may be in person, by telephone, by e-mail, or by other written communication. Among other provisions, this act provides that a student 13 years of age or older may be subject to automatic expulsion on the third occurrence of habitually disruptive behavior during a school year. (Students under age 13 may be subject to expulsion for such conduct pursuant to other school policies and procedures.)

The term "*disruptive behavior"* refers to student conduct that is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with a teacher/administrator's communication with students in a classroom, with a student's ability to learn, or with the operation of a school/school-related activity, and also which is not covered by other laws related to violence or possession of weapons/controlled substances on school property, school vehicles, or at school-related activities. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Foul, profane, obscene, threatening, defiant, or abusive language or action toward teachers or other school employees
- Defiance, ridicule, or verbal attack of a teacher
- Willful, deliberate, and overt acts of disobedience of the directions of a teacher

The term "*habitually disruptive*" refers to actions of a student which cause disruption in a classroom, on school property or vehicles, or at a school-related activity *more than two occasions during a school year* and to disruptive behavior that was initiated, willful, and overt on the part of the student and which required the attention of school personnel to deal with the disruption.

After the second instance of behavior that is determined by the principal/designated administrator to have seriously interfered with the school environment, the parents/guardians will be contacted to help develop a behavior modification plan for the student.

REGULATIONS

A. Administrators in the district, including principals, assistant principals, assistant superintendents, and the superintendent are directed to enforce the policies of the Board of Education.

B. All school-sponsored activities, regardless of time or place, are considered an extension of the school day and shall be governed by and subject to the same policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

Students who are suspended will not be permitted to participate in or attend school activities such as band performances, athletic events, or school-sponsored student meetings for the duration of the detention/suspension. Should a suspension be appealed, a student will be allowed to attend class, but will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities until the suspension time is complete.

C. **Any act that is considered a violent crime or a felony must be reported to law enforcement**.

D. Students may appeal decisions rendered by the school principal or assistant principal to the superintendent or his assistants if the consequence is over 3 days OSS.

E. These procedures will not prevent the School Board from taking action other than that recommended by the principal, assistant principal, the superintendent, or his/her assistants.

CLASSROOM TEACHER DISCIPLINE

Primary responsibility for orderly classroom operation rests with the individual classroom teacher. The classroom teacher is responsible for establishing an environment where students may learn the rules of polite society and respect for the rights of the teacher and other students. In order to preserve such an atmosphere, the classroom teacher may impose disciplinary sanctions for minor infractions after establishing a set of class rules with the student.

Principals may use approved individual teacher discipline plans or school-wide classroom management plans to maintain an environment conducive to learning. Plans must be posted.

***Note**: Positive reinforcement for good behavior is also part of the discipline plan. Students who behave properly and follow the rules may earn rewards, such as free time, happy notes, positive calls to parents, gifts, awards, etc.*

DUE PROCESS (JCAA)

The superintendent, assistant superintendents, principals, and assistant principals will have sole jurisdiction to hear and decide matters of student discipline outside of minor infractions dealt with by the classroom teacher. The administrators will impose necessary sanctions if guilt for the incident is determined. The categories of punishment shall be those set forth under "Sanctions." In the event the recommendation for punishment is suspension of 3 days or less, the principal or assistant principal of the school in question will have the authority to act as the hearing officer at the parent's request. When the offense warrants suspension from school for more than 3 days but less than 11 days, the superintendent or his/her designee may serve as the hearing officer at the parent's request.

DISCIPLINE PLAN (JDA)

The Superintendent is responsible for discipline within the Lowndes County School District. This authority may be delegated and is hereby delegated by the superintendent as herein set forth. Principals are required to use professional judgment when administering punishment, basing the punishments on the students' past records and individual situations.

A parent, guardian, or custodian of a student enrolled in this school district shall be financially responsible for his/her student's destructive acts against school property or persons. They shall also be responsible for any criminal fines brought against such student for unlawful activity occurring on school grounds or buses.

A parent, guardian, or custodian of a student enrolled in this school district may be requested to appear at school, by the school attendance officer or an appropriate school official, for a conference regarding any discipline acts of his/her child. If the parent, guardian, or custodian refuses or willfully fails to attend such discipline conference,

he/she may be summoned, through proper notification from the superintendent or the school attendance officer, and required to attend such discipline conference.

The parents, legal guardian, or custodian of each student shall sign a statement verifying they have been given notice of the discipline plan.

DISCIPLINE SANCTIONS

Each year students create new games or practices (for example, horseplay, classroom or hallway disruptions, etc.) that are distracting or dangerous to other students. When this occurs, the principal has the right to establish rules and punishments to fit the situation.

Specific sanctions (consequences) for disciplinary infractions are as follows:

1. Informal classroom punishment prescribed by the classroom teacher
2. Corporal punishment – *(Corporal punishment may be administered to students **without disabilities** in accordance with district policy and applicable state law. Its use is **not mandatory**, and school principals are not required to implement or offer corporal punishment as a disciplinary option).*
3. Assignment to in-school detention, an alternate setting within the school building.
4. Overnight suspension
5. Suspension from school up to 10 days
6. Suspension from school bus for 10 days or less
7. Suspension from school bus for 10 days or more
8. Expulsion from the school system, which is removal of the student from further school attendance

Any student who participates in any form of sexual activity or commits any type of sexual assault towards another student will be suspended pending due process hearing and Board action. If Board action is expulsion, the expulsion will be for one calendar year. Law enforcement will be notified.

STUDENT CONDUCT (JCA)

All students enrolled in the Lowndes County School District will be expected to conform to the ordinary rules of polite society, to be truthful, to respect the rights of others, and to have regard for the preservation of school property and the private property of others. It is assumed that a student's behavior is satisfactory or better unless parents are notified by telephone or letter. This notification will usually solve the problem. If the problem isn't resolved, the parents will be asked to come to the school for a conference.

STUDENT CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

ARSON (JCBE)

No student shall set fire to any school building or property.

Students who are guilty of arson will be suspended until due process hearing and Board action.

ASSAULT AND/OR BATTERY OF A SCHOOL EMPLOYEE (JCBE)

A student shall not cause, threaten to cause, or behave in such a way as may cause physical injury to a school employee at any time on or off the school campus, while at any school activity/function, or under school supervision.

Students guilty of assault/battery of a school employee will be suspended until due process hearing and Board action. Law enforcement officials will also be notified. In severe assault cases, a report will be filed with the Sheriff's Department.

AUTOMOBILE USE ON CLOSED CAMPUS (JGFF)

Cars driven to campus by students must be registered in the office and **parked on the school campus** in an area reserved for students. The student is required to purchase a parking sticker for the car and display this sticker either on the lower right-hand side of the front windshield, on the rear bumper, or on the rearview mirror. When purchasing the parking sticker, the student must show proof of a current auto tag and liability insurance, along with his/her valid driver's license and parental permission to have the car at school.

Students must park their cars upon arrival on campus and immediately exit their vehicles. They will not be permitted to return to their car during the school day or leave campus for any reason unless written permission is granted from an administrator. This includes lunch, study hall, and other times during the school day. When checking out, students must immediately exit the campus. Students may not sit in their cars before or during school.
Middle-school students are not permitted to have or drive cars to or from campus.

Violation of these parking rules or the operation of a motor vehicle in such a way as to cause damage to school property or to endanger life or limb of persons using school facilities, driveways, or parking areas may result in the following sanctions:

a) 1st offense: Suspension of car privileges for 1 week, parent notification/conference
b) 2nd offense: Suspension of car privileges for 2 weeks, parent notification/conference
c) 3rd offense: Loss of driving privilege

BUILDING AND PLAYGROUND RULES

The following rules must be observed while in the school building or on the playground:

a. There will be no running in the building, in the breezeways, or on the sidewalks.
b. No horseplay, wrestling, or tackling is allowed. Students must keep their hands, feet, etc., to themselves.
c. Students must follow the directions of the persons on duty.
d. Students must stay in assigned areas.
e. Students must walk to the right of the halls.
f. No loud talking or yelling is allowed in the building.

g. Students are not allowed to throw rocks.
h. Students are not allowed to bring or use skateboards or skates of any kind in/on hallways, sideways, parking areas, etc., on school property at any time.
i. No gum or candy is allowed in the building or on the bus. Discipline for violation of this policy will be determined by the building principal.

If a student breaks any of these rules, he/she will be disciplined for each offense. The discipline will be imposed by the teacher or personnel on duty. Repeated offenses may result in an office referral.

BULLYING/HARASSMENT

The Board of Trustees of the Lowndes County School District prohibits bullying or harassing behavior of students, school employees, or volunteers. The Lowndes County School District will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no person or school employee is subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by other students or other school employees.
Definitions Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic that:

1. Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, or

2. Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's education, including but not limited to educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

A "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

The above conduct constitutes bullying if that conduct interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

Bullying or harassing behavior will not be condoned or tolerated when it takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, or when it takes place off school property when such conduct, in the determination of the school superintendent or principal, renders the offending person’s presence a disruption to the operation of the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils and teacher of such class as a whole.

The District encourages anyone who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior to report the incident to the appropriate school official. Retaliation or reprisal against any person, including a victim, a witness, or another person, who in good faith provides information concerning an incident of bullying or harassing behavior, is prohibited.

The Lowndes County School District recognizes the fundamental right of every student to take “reasonable actions” as may be necessary to defend himself or herself from an attack by another student who has evidenced menacing or threatening behavior through bullying or harassing.

“Reasonable action” includes, but is not limited to, promptly reporting the bullying or harassing behavior to a teacher, principal, counselor, or other school employee. The Lowndes County School District contact person is Kerry Bailey (662-244-5010).

BUS CONDUCT (JCDAD)

Appropriate conduct on the school bus is essential to maintain the safety of everyone. The bus driver has the responsibility for the safety and conduct of students riding the bus. He/she will not allow any type of distracting behavior by students. The right of students to ride a bus is a **privilege** and is **conditional upon a student's demonstration of appropriate school bus safety practices**.

Security cameras, for surveillance purposes, may be installed and utilized on transportation vehicles owned and operated by the Lowndes County School District.

Unauthorized persons are not permitted on any bus. (Mississippi Code 37-41-2, 1973, "*It shall be unlawful for any individual, other than a student scheduled to be a passenger upon that particular bus, a member of the public school administration or faculty, or a law enforcement official, to directly or indirectly interfere in any way with passenger ingress and egress or the operation , including unauthorized boarding thereof, of a bus used in public school student transportation unless permission has been obtained as prescribed by pertinent rules and regulations promulgated by the state board of education of the local school authorities*".)

The school bus is an extension of the classroom. As such, students are expected to demonstrate the same levels of safety, responsibility and respectful behavior that is expected in the classroom. Listed below are general and safety expectations for all students riding a District bus:

A. General School Bus Expectations

All bus expectations apply to daily transportation, during school sponsored trips and at bus pick-up locations

All students are expected to:

- Be on time at the designated bus stop and expected to wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to load.
- Exit the bus with all personal belongings (e.g., books, lunches, or other articles).
- Remain in their seats at all times when the bus is in motion
- Be courteous and respectful to fellow students and the bus driver.
- Ride only their assigned bus. Exceptions must be at the written request of the parent and approved by a building administrator.

B. School Bus Safety Expectations

Students are expected to consistently perform the following behaviors to assist bus drivers with maintaining safety:

All students are expected to:

- Keep hands and heads inside the bus at all times.
- Speak in a low (conversational) voice to avoid distracting the driver.
- Keep all materials inside the bus at all times (i.e., no throwing objects out of the window)
- Remain absolutely quiet when the bus approaches a railroad crossing.
- Keep food, gum, drinks and tobacco products off the bus at all times.
- Keep weapons, drugs and/or any object that could harm others or be destructive to the bus off the bus at all times.
- Always be respectful toward others by making positive comments to others (i.e., no profanity or harassing comments) and hands, feet and objects to yourself at all times (i.e., no touching of others or throwing objects on the bus)
- Always be respectful toward the bus driver and follow his/her directions the first time given.

- Never open the bus emergency doors and/or activate emergency alarms unless directly instructed by the driver.

Students who violate the bus expectations will be reported to the school administrator where specific consequences will be issued. In addition, periodic review of bus tapes will occur and could result in disciplinary action(s) for policy violations.

Level 1 Bus Infractions. These infractions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to be at the bus stop at the appropriate time
- Failure to enter and/or exit in an appropriate manner
- Leaving your seat when the bus is in motion.
- Putting hands and heads out of the bus window.
- Speaking in a loud voice that could distract the bus driver
- Failing to follow bus driver's directions the first time given
- Throwing any object out of the school bus window or door
- Eating or drinking on the bus
- Talking when the bus is approaching a railroad crossing

The consequence actions for failure to comply with Level 1 bus expectations are as follows:

1st offense:

- Written parent notification of the incident
- Administrator/student conference

2nd offense:

- 1-2 day bus suspension
- Administrator/parent/student conference to develop a bus safety intervention plan

3rd offense:

- 3-5 day bus suspension
- Administrator/parent/student conference

4th offense:

- Due process hearing conducted with parent by district administrator
- Recommendation to the School Board to terminate student bus privileges for the remainder of the school year

Level 2 Bus Infractions. These infractions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Creating a disturbance or loud noises that significantly distracts the bus driver
- Making negative, profane or harassing comments to peers.
- Possession of tobacco product(s) or dangerous object(s).*
- Making negative or disrespectful comments to the bus driver.
- Attempting to and/or opening the bus emergency doors or activating the bus emergency alarms.
- Inappropriate physical contact (e.g., pushing, tripping or shoving another student).

The consequence actions for failure to comply with Level 2 bus expectations are as follows:

1st offense:

- 3 day suspension from bus
- Administrator/student conference to develop a bus safety intervention plan.

2nd offense:

- 5 day bus suspension
- Administrator/parent/student conference

3rd offense:

- Due process hearing conducted with parent by district administrator
- Recommendation to the School Board to terminate student bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Level 3 Bus Infractions. These infractions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Extreme harassment or intimidation toward others*
- Fighting or physical assault *
- Possession of a weapon or illegal drugs *

Infraction will automatically result in additional disciplinary actions as outlined in the Code of Conduct. Other Level 3 bus infractions may also result in additional disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate by the school administrator.

The consequence actions for failure to comply with Level 3 bus expectations are as follows:

- Due process hearing conducted with parent by district administrator
- Recommendation the School Board to terminate student bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.

CAUSING FALSE FIRE ALARMS

Students shall not cause false fire alarms.

If a student causes false fire alarms, the recommended sanctions will be as follows:

a) First offense: 5 days suspension
b) Second offense: Suspension until due process hearing and Board action

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES (IL)

Elementary and Middle School

Use of cell phones, smart watches, or any electronic communication devices is prohibited during academic, instructional hours. This is from the time school begins in the morning until classes are dismissed in the afternoon and includes class changes, breaks, lunch, bus routes to and from school, and after school detention. If seen or heard, cell phones/electronic devices will be collected and turned in to the office.

High School

Use of cell phones or any electronic device is prohibited in the classroom at all times. Any electronic device seen or heard in the classroom will be collected and turned in to the office. Electronic devices can be permitted in common areas outside of instructional time as permitted by administration.

Students who are caught recording fights on their cell phone will be subjected to the same punishment as the ones who are fighting.

The sanctions for violating this rule are as follows:

First offense: Phone will be held until Parent/Guardian contact is made and returned to the student at the end of the day.

Second offense: Phone will be held in the office for 30 days. Parent may pick up the phone for a fee of $25 before the 30 days.

Third offense: Phone will be held in the office for 60 days. Parent may pick up the phone for a fee of $50 before the 60 days.

The school prohibits the possession and/or use of any electronic device, including cell phones and personal digital assistance devices, during the administration of scheduled statewide tests (Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2009). Students who are found to have an electronic device during testing will be considered insubordinate and punished accordingly.

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. No student shall cheat on any exam, project, homework, or report. You need to be aware of the importance of academic honesty in all of your classes. The following information is intended to help you understand what academic dishonesty is, and the consequences of academic dishonesty.

Most Common Forms of Academic Dishonesty

A. Plagiarism

Plagiarism happens when an individual uses another person's ideas, expressions or writing as if they were his/her own.

- *Copying verbatim* – This is the most common form and happens when an individual copies words, expressions or ideas directly from another source (such as a book or article, the internet, or another person) without giving proper credit to the author.
- *Paraphrasing* – This happens when an individual borrows written ideas from a source and rewrites them in his/her own words, without giving proper credit to the author.
- *Use of an idea* – This happens when an individual adapts an idea from another source without giving proper credit to the author or creators. This could happen, for example, when you are asked to write an original piece, such as a short story, and you borrow an idea from a movie, TV program, article or classmate without acknowledging the original source.

B. Cheating on Tests and Quizzes

- bringing answers into the test room
- copying from another student
- sharing answers with another student
- using unauthorized notes or technology

C. Asking/Telling other students what is on a test or quiz

D. Copying/Sharing Homework

E. Taking credit for work that you didn't do (ex. Not acknowledging the assistance of a parent, friend or tutor)

The sanction for cheating is: Every time a student is caught cheating, he/she will be given a grade of zero and his/her parents will be notified**. Continuous violation of this rule could result in additional sanctions.**

CRIMINAL LAW VIOLATIONS (JCBE)

Sanctions may be taken against a student who has been formally charged with a violation of criminal law and whose presence on the school campus may endanger the safety of other students and cause substantial disruption to school operations.

DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION OF SCHOOL BOOKS OR EQUIPMENT (JCBD)

A student shall not cause damage to school books or equipment.

The sanctions for violating this rule are as follows:

a) First offense: 2 days suspension and restitution
b) Second offense: 3-10 days suspension and restitution
c) Third offense: Restitution and suspension until due process hearing and Board action

Restitution will be made by the offender. Law enforcement officials may be involved.

DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION OF SCHOOL OR PRIVATE PROPERTY (JCBD)

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to school or private property or steal private property while on school grounds or at a school activity/function off school grounds that is under school supervision.

The sanctions for violating this rule are as follows:

a) First offense: 3 days suspension and restitution
b) Second offense: 3-10 days suspension and restitution
c) Third offense: Restitution and suspension until due process hearing and Board action

Restitution will be made by the offender. Law enforcement officials may be involved.

DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION OF IPAD/MACBOOK

A student shall maintain a fully working device at all times. The student is responsible for a damaged device.

The sanctions for damage to the device are as follows:

a). First damage repair: $50

b). Second damage repair: $100

c). Third damage repair: $150

If the device is lost, LCSD requires that the student complete and sign a statement fully describing the circumstances of the loss and pay replacement costs.

If stolen, LCSD will require the student to file a police report, a copy of which shall be provided to LCSD.

LCSD reserves the right to charge the student the full cost for repair or replacement when damage occurs due to gross negligence.

DISRUPTION AND/OR INTERFERENCE WITH SCHOOL

Students may not block any entrance, stop any class/function from taking place, block any normal pedestrian or vehicular traffic, or otherwise deprive anyone of access to or use of any facility, program, or activity associated with the Lowndes County School District.

The sanctions for violation of this rule are as follows:

a) First offense: Suspension until due process hearing and Board action

DRESS CODE (JCDB)

Good learning situations depend on the best possible behavior and attitude of students. Students are encouraged to take pride in themselves by being neat and clean, thus reflecting favorably on themselves and the school.

Safety, health, and individual dignity provide the basis for any dress code. This District believes that parents and teachers should recognize that the main goal of our schools is to provide a quality education for students which will help them become useful citizens in society. Thus, any clothing that is disruptive to the learning situation or is embarrassing to others is prohibited. Disciplinary action will be taken if students wear such clothing.

Teachers may, at any time, counsel with students about attire that may not be acceptable. The principal or his/her designee will render the final authority when there is a question as to whether the student is adhering to the appropriate standard of dress.

Students' names should be written in all sweaters, coats, and jackets. **The school is not responsible for lost items of clothing.**

All of the following rules apply at school:

1. Clothing that includes sexually explicit, obscene, suggestive, or derogatory language, gestures, symbols, or remarks is prohibited.
2. Clothing, jewelry, accessories, or grooming styles that advertise, promote, depict, or suggest illegal substances, alcoholic beverages, gang or cult affiliation, or tobacco—through color, symbols, arrangement, or any other attribute—are prohibited.
3. Fraternity/sorority or gang-related clothing, jerseys, shirts, or symbols are not allowed. *(MS Code/Sec 37-11-39)*
4. Shoes must be worn at all times. Cleats and house shoes are not permitted.
5. Head coverings—including hats, headscarves, bonnets, rollers, sunglasses, caps, hoods, and sweatbands—may not be worn inside the building unless approved for religious or medical reasons. Headgear worn to/from school must be removed upon entering. Headbands are permitted.
6. Belts and overall straps must be fastened and worn properly.
7. Tights, leggings, jeggings, yoga pants, and leotards may only be worn under shorts, skirts, dresses, or tops that fall at fingertip length **and** ensure full coverage.
8. Jeans or pants with rips, holes, or frays located from the waist to 5 inches above the knee may be worn only if no skin is visible through the openings.

9. Undergarments must be fully covered and should not be visible at any time.
10. Shirts and blouses must cover the stomach; midriffs must not be exposed.
11. Pants must be worn at the waist. Sagging or oversized pants that reveal undergarments are not allowed.
12. The hem of all shorts, dresses, and skirts must be no shorter than 5 inches above the top of the knee.
13. Clothing must not be excessively low in the front or back. Backless garments are not allowed.
14. Off-the-shoulder shirts are not allowed.
15. Spaghetti strap tops or dresses are not permitted.
16. Bras should be worn if needed.
17. Pajamas may not be worn unless approved by the principal for a special event.
18. Elementary students (K–5) should not wear makeup.
19. All clothing should be free from odors that interfere with the learning environment. (e.*g. smoke, perfumes/cologne, marijuana, etc.*)

*** When there is any doubt that students are not adhering to the appropriate standard of dress, the principal or his/her designee will render the final authority. Any clothing considered too revealing by an administrator may not be worn.**

Dress for West Lowndes Elementary and West Lowndes 7th & 8th grade Students

Students attending West Lowndes Elementary and West Lowndes 7th & 8th grade are required to wear school uniforms according to guidelines set by the principal and school committee.

Students may be suspended from school for violating the dress code. The sanctions for this offense are:

a) First offense: Changing of clothes and notification of parent or 1 day ISD
b) Second offense: Detention for remainder of day or 1 day ISD
c) Third offense: 1 day suspension

ELECTRONICS, TOYS, ETC.

Students must leave toys and electronic devices at home. This includes, but is not limited to, toy cars, trading cards, laser lights, pagers, radios, tape recorders, c.d. players, mp3 players, etc. If a student brings one of these items to school, it will be confiscated by a school official and turned in to the office. The parent must personally claim the item by the end of the school year. After that time, the principal is no longer responsible for any items, and all unclaimed items will be given to charity.

Note: A toy is defined as any item that is played with in class.

FIGHTING AND/OR ASSAULT/BATTERY OF ANOTHER STUDENT OR A PERSON NOT EMPLOYED BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT (JCBE)

A student shall not cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or mental anguish to any other student, person, or guest, or cause or threaten to cause damage to anyone's personal property while on the school grounds, on a school bus, at school functions, and/or under school supervision.

The sanctions for violation of this rule are as follows:

a) First offense: 1 to 3 days suspension (exception: Students in grades K-2 may be given corporal punishment or ISD)
b) Repeated offense: 3-10 days suspension or suspension until due process hearing and Board action

Sanctions may be increased if injuries result.

If both or all students involved are fighting, all parties will be suspended.

In extreme fights, the Sheriff's Department will be called to take the students to the Detention Center, and charges may be filed.

GAMBLING

Gambling will not be tolerated in the school building, on school property, or at any school-sponsored activity.

The sanctions for violation of this rule are as follows:

a) First offense: 1 day suspension
b) Second offense: 2 days suspension
c) Third offense: Suspension until due process hearing and Board action

GANG ACTIVITY POLICY (JCBB)

This policy will constitute a warning of the implementation of this policy. No further warning will be issued; therefore, this policy/warning should be read very carefully.

Gangs which initiate, advocate, or promote activities which threaten the safety or well-being of persons or property on school grounds or disrupt the school environment are harmful to the educational process. The use of hand signals, jewelry, accessories, or manners of grooming that, by virtue of color, trademark, arrangement, symbol, or affiliation of such group, present a clear and present danger are prohibited. They are contrary to the school environment and educational objectives and create an atmosphere where unlawful acts or violations of school regulations may occur.

The Lowndes County School District shall enforce the above rule, and any student wearing, carrying, or displaying gang paraphernalia or exhibiting behaviors/gestures symbolizing gang membership and/or participation in activities which intimidate or affect the actions of other students will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. **The Lowndes County Sheriff's Department determines what is designated as gang paraphernalia.**

A student may be ***suspended from school for five days*** for violation of the above policy, and he/she will be ***subject to expulsion if he/she continues to violate the policy.***
Any student who attempts to use extortion or intimidation tactics against any other student will be subject to immediate expulsion.

INSUBORDINATION

Students must comply with reasonable directions/commands of teachers, substitute teachers, teacher aides, principals, and other authorized school personnel when on the school grounds or under school supervision.

The sanctions for insubordination are as follows:

a) First offense: 1 day suspension
b) Second offense: 3 to 5 day suspension
c) Third offense: Suspension until due process hearing and Board action

INTENT TO USE WEAPONS AND/OR DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS (JCDAE)

A student shall not show intent to use weapons or dangerous instruments, or any instrument converted to be used as such.

Students who show intent to use weapons or dangerous instruments, or any instrument converted to be used as such, will be suspended until due process hearing and Board action. If the Board action is expulsion, the expulsion for this category of behavior shall be for one (1) calendar year. Law enforcement will also be notified.

POSSESSION/USE OF WEAPONS AND/OR DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS (JCDAE)

While on school grounds or under school supervision, students shall not possess, handle, or transmit a knife, razor, brass knuckles, ice pick, explosives, loaded cane, sword, machete, pistol, rifle, shotgun, box gun or pellet gun, chemical dispensing instrument, or any other object which reasonably can be considered a weapon, or any object considered to be a dangerous weapon, as defined by the Mississippi Code of 1972, Title 97 and all sections under said Title 97.

Students who possess, transmit, or use weapons and/or dangerous instruments on school grounds or under school supervision will be suspended immediately until due process hearing and Board action. Law officials will also be notified. If Board action is expulsion, the expulsion for this category of behavior shall be for one (1) calendar year.

PROFANITY/VULGARITY

Verbal and/or written profanity/vulgarity and possession/display of pornographic materials is prohibited.

The sanctions for violation of this rule are as follows:

a) First offense: 1 day ISD or corporal punishment
b) Repeated offense: 1 day OSS each time and parent conference

SMOKING/USE OF TOBACCO (JCDC)

No student shall use or possess tobacco products, electronic cigarettes/vapes, matches or a lighter at school, at school functions, or at extracurricular activities.

The sanctions for violation of this rule are:

a) First offense: 1 day suspension and counseling
b) Second offense: 3 days suspension
c) Third offense and thereafter: 5-10 days suspension

STEALING

Stealing, of any kind, is prohibited.

The minimum sanctions for violation of this rule are as follows:

a) First offense: 2 days suspension and restitution (Grades 6-12); 1 day ISD or corporal punishment and restitution; Repeated offenses: 1 day out of school (Grades K-5)
b) Second offense: 3-10 days suspension and restitution
c) Third offense: Restitution and suspension until due process hearing and Board action

Note: Severe cases may result in expulsion.

TARDIES (ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL)

Students shall not be tardy to class.

Students who report to school after the morning tardy bell will report to the front office. Students in the middle school must be signed in by an adult. Tardies excused by a doctor or legal excuse will not count towards this policy.

The sanctions for tardiness are as follows:

a) 1st tardy: Warning
b) 2nd tardy: Parental contact
c) 3rd tardy: Office discipline referral, after-school detention, corporal punishment, or 1 day in-school detention
d) 4th tardy: Office discipline referral, after-school detention, corporal punishment, or 2 days in-school detention
e) 5th or more: Office discipline referral, after-school detention, corporal punishment, or 1 day out-of-school suspension

***Policy is for each nine-week period*.**

USE OR POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS, STIMULANT DRUGS, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, DRUG PARAPHERNALIA, INTOXICANTS, OR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES (JCDAC)

A student who uses, possesses, sells, transmits, or is under the influence of a controlled substance (as defined by the Mississippi Code of 1972), other than those prescribed by a physician, while on the campus or in the buildings of the Lowndes County School District, at any school-sponsored activity or function, or on a school bus or in a school-sponsored vehicle ***will be suspended until due process hearing and Board action. Law enforcement officials will also be notified. If Board action is expulsion, the expulsion for this category of behavior shall be for one (1) calendar year.***

These controlled substances include, but are not limited to, narcotic drugs; marijuana and constituents contained therein; hallucinogenic substances such as phencyclidine (PCP), barbiturates, cocaine, and related substances; amphetamine-like substances; and alcohol.

The Lowndes County School Board Policy authorizes an unannounced search at any time during the school year with the use of dogs trained to detect illegal drugs.

The Lowndes County School District has a drug-free policy for students and staff. Students and staff are subject to unannounced drug screening at any time during the school year by a third party drug testing company.

VIOLATION OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Students shall not cut class.

The sanctions for violation of school attendance are:

a) First offense: ISD and parent conference
b) Second offense: 1-day OSS and parent conference
c) Repeated offenses will be considered acts of insubordination. Students will be referred to the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team.

SUSPENSIONS, APPEALS, AND HEARING REGULATIONS

SUSPENSIONS (10 DAYS OR LESS) (JDD)

When unacceptable behavior cannot be corrected by the resources of the teacher or school administration, the School Board hereby authorizes the school principal or his designee to suspend any student for violation of any published rule or regulation or any other act of misconduct or insubordination as a final effort to influence the student's future behavior.

A student suspended from school shall receive unexcused absences for all classes missed.

Students who are suspended out of school cannot participate or attend any school sponsored activity until they have completed their suspension. This includes but is not limited to practices, rehearsals, performances, activities and games.

Students who have been assigned In School Suspension/Detention may practice, but cannot participate in a performance or game until the punishment is complete.

Parents or guardians shall be notified when a student is suspended from school. A conference with the parent or guardian is required prior to the student's re-admission to school.

A. Due Process for Suspensions (JCAA)

Both students and faculty members are responsible for reporting infractions of student discipline. When a classroom teacher or other person suspects that a student has committed an infraction warranting a sanction greater than that which the classroom teacher is empowered to administer, the violation must be reported as soon as possible to the principal or assistant principal of the appropriate school.

The superintendent, deputy superintendent, assistant superintendent, principals, and assistant principals will have sole jurisdiction to hear and decide matters of student discipline outside of minor infractions dealt with by the classroom teacher. The administrators will impose necessary sanctions if guilt for the incident is determined. The categories of punishment shall be those set forth under "Sanctions." In the event the recommendation for punishment is suspension of 3 days or less, the principal or assistant principal of the school in question will have the authority to act as the hearing officer at the parent's request. When the offense warrants suspension from school for more than 3 days but less than 11 days, the superintendent or his/her designee may serve as the hearing officer at the parent's request.

The administrator will investigate. At its conclusion, the administrator will advise the student of the findings and will impose a sanction, if warranted. In all cases where the imposition of sanctions may result in a suspension of 10 days or less, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The administrator will inform the student of the specific act with which he/she is charged and of who made the charges.
2. The administrator will notify the student of his/her right to respond to or refute the charges and will allow the student to tell his/her side of the story.
3. The administrator will inform the student of his/her right to have witnesses appear in his/her behalf, and the administrator will interview the witnesses.
4. The administrator will explain the maximum punishment that may be imposed.
5. If the student is found guilty, the administrator will inform the student of his/her right to appeal the charges to the superintendent or the assistant superintendent.

6. The administrator will notify the parents/guardian by phone immediately if the student is suspended and tell them the student has been informed of his/her right to appeal.

The parent must accompany the suspended student back to school for a conference.

B. Hearing Procedures for Suspensions

1. The hearing will be presided over by the principal or assistant principal. The hearing will not be open to the public.
2. The format of the hearing will be as follows:
    a. Presentation of the charge, including the specific act or acts of misconduct with which the student is charged
    b. Supporting testimony or an explanation by the administrator of the specific information recorded concerning the charge
    c. Presentation of testimony by the accused student and his/her witnesses and any supporting information presented by the accused
3. After hearing and examining the evidence, the administrator will first decide whether the accused student is guilty or not guilty of the specified charge or if he/she is guilty of any lesser offense. If the administrator reaches a decision of guilt; he/she will then determine the sanction that will be imposed. These are distinctly separate decisions.
4. The administrator will advise the accused student of the decision and impose a sanction, if applicable, at the conclusion of the hearing.
5. A record of the written findings will be furnished to the accused student following the verbal notification.
6. The accused student will be informed verbally and in writing of his/her right to appeal the decision to the superintendent and of his/her right to request an appeal on the finding of guilt or the severity of the sanction, or both.
7. The administrator will summarize the proceeding in writing.

EXPULSIONS OR SUSPENSIONS OF 11 DAYS OR MORE (JDE)

A student may be expelled for committing any of the offenses identified as expellable offenses in the discipline plan.

If a student commits an expellable offense, the parent(s) can waive their due process rights by signing a waiver. The student would then be recommended for a 1-year expulsion to the school board without a due process hearing.

PreK – 6th grade students who commit a nonviolent expellable offense can return to the classroom on the principal's recommendation as long as it is determined the student poses no threat to others.

A. Due Process for Expulsions or Suspensions of 11 Days or More (JCAA)

In all cases where the imposition of sanctions may be suspension of 11 days or more or expulsion, the student and the student's parents/guardians will be notified of the following:

1. The specific charges made against the student
2. The nature of the evidence that is to be presented against the student and whether the evidence is to be presented by affidavit or oral testimony
3. The names of the witnesses and a brief summary of their expected testimony

4. The recommendation for punishment
5. The time, date, and place where a hearing of the accusation will be held
6. The student's right to bring witnesses to testify in his/her behalf and/or to present affidavits at the hearing
7. The student's right to be accompanied by his/her parents and/or counsel of his/her own choosing

Official notification of the due process hearing will be given to the student and to the student's parents/guardian not less than seven (7) calendar days before the date of the hearing, unless the parents and the child waive the seven (7) day notice requirement. The notice will be sent by certified mail or hand-delivered, and a signed letter or receipt will be obtained from the student or his/her parents/guardian.

Any student that is recommended for expulsion may not return to school until the hearing is held and the School Board has made a decision. The building principal and the superintendent will determine if the child is dangerous to himself and others.

B. Hearing Procedures for Suspensions of 11 Days or More or Expulsions

1. The hearing in these instances will be conducted before the Superintendent or the Board of Education or designated Hearing Officer. The Lowndes County School District normally employs a Hearing Officer and, unless otherwise indicated, the hearing will be before the Hearing Officer. The accused student may bring an advisor of his/her own choosing to the hearing, at no expense to the school. This advisor may be an attorney, a parent, or guardian.
2. The format of the hearing will be:
    a. Presentation of the charge
    b. Supporting testimony or information on the charge
    c. Presentation of testimony by the accused student and his/her witnesses and any supporting information presented by the accused
3. The accused student will have an opportunity to hear and refute all testimony and evidence given against him/her. The student may present any evidence in his/her own behalf pertinent to the accusations made against him/her and may reply to charges or present witnesses in his/her own behalf. The student may cross-examine any witness testifying against him/her.
4. All findings of fact concerning guilt or innocence will be based solely upon the evidence presented and will be based upon proof by evidence of the breach with which he/she is charged.
5. No formal rules of evidence and/or procedure will be followed. The hearing will be conducted in an informal but fair manner.
6. All testimony will be given under oath. If a witness elects not to appear, his/her affidavit can be used and will be accepted and considered by the hearing officer.
7. A record of the proceedings held before the Board of Education or its representative will be kept either by a tape recording of the testimony or by documentation recorded by a court stenographer or reporter. The tapes and/or records will be filed with the superintendent and will be kept for a period of two years or until the student involved graduates, whichever occurs first.
8. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board of Education or Hearing Officer will prepare a written record of their findings. These findings will be hand-delivered or mailed to the student within five (5) school days after the completion of the hearing, unless circumstances exist which prohibit the School Board from meeting. This time limit can be extended by the Board for extenuating circumstances. If the hearing is conducted by a Hearing Officer, as mentioned above, the Hearing Officer will prepare a written record of the finding of facts and recommendation for punishment. As stated above, the Board will within five (5) days (or after an extension) render a final conclusion and finding in regard to the student discipline. The

Board will review the finding and recommendation of the Hearing Officer and the transcript of the hearing, if necessary, and any other pertinent information. Thereafter, the Board will make its decision. The decision of the Board will be hand-delivered or mailed to the student no later than five (5) working days after the hearing.

9. If the Board of Education finds the student guilty of some or all of the charges made against him/her, the school record and previous conduct of the student will be taken into consideration in determining the discipline administered to the student.

10. A student will not be allowed to return to the school setting, under any circumstance, wherein school violence, drugs and alcohol, or dangerous conduct is committed, which is detrimental to the school system. The principal or superintendent may recommend a denial of admission, which shall be effective immediately, pending the conclusion of the due process procedure, if circumstances exist wherein a deadly weapon, drugs, or other dangerous circumstances were involved, which will be detrimental to the school system.

11. The due process requirements of the Lowndes County School District Board - specifically, "Policy Describer Code JCAA" - is the policy upon which this handbook provision is premised. Any provisions, hereof, in conflict with this District policy shall be overruled by said policy. Further, Mississippi Code Sections 37-11-55, et. seq., are the areas upon which this handbook procedure is premised, as well as Sections 37-9-71; 37-5-9; 37-11-92 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended and annotated.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS (JCA)

Discipline Procedures

1. School personnel may order the removal of a child for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days to the extent that such removal would be applied to a child without a disability for the same offense or if the child's behavior is deemed to be dangerous.

2. Additional removals of not more than ten (10) consecutive days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct may be ordered as long as those removals do not constitute a change in placement. A change in placement occurs when a series of removals is made that constitute a pattern due to the child being removed for more than ten (10) school days in a school year, and because of factors such as length of each removal, the total amount of time the child is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

3. After the child has been suspended for a total of twenty (20) days for school rule violations, the school will provide services within the school, unless the child represents a danger to himself/herself or others.

4. After a child has been removed from his/her current placement for more than ten (10) cumulative school days in the same school year, the local school district must provide services during any subsequent days of removal.

Behavioral Assessment

The following procedures shall be implemented when a child has been removed for more than ten (10) school days or when a change in placement occurs.

1. An IEP Committee must meet either before or no later than ten (10) school days after either first removing the child for more than ten (10) school days or commencing a removal that constitutes a change in placement.

2. A Functional Behavioral Assessment must be conducted and the results reviewed by the IEP Committee. The IEP Committee will develop appropriate behavioral interventions to be addressed on the IEP.

Manifestation Determination Review

When a disciplinary action is contemplated to change a child's placement to an interim alternative setting due to a weapon violation or due to a hearing officer's decision, or if a disciplinary action involving a change in placement (expulsion) is contemplated for other behavior that violated any rule or code of conduct of the public agency that applies to all children, the following must occur:

1. Immediately, if possible, but in no case later than ten (10) school days after the date on which the decision to take that action is made, a review shall be conducted of the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

2. A review as described above will be conducted by the IEP Committee and other qualified personnel. This review may occur when the committee meets to discuss the child's Functional Behavioral Assessment and behavioral intervention plan. The IEP Committee and other qualified personnel will determine that the behavior of the child was/was not a manifestation of the child's disability.

APPEALS

A written summary will be kept of all disciplinary proceedings, and if the student's parent chooses, he/she may appeal the building administrator's decision to the superintendent or his/her designee. The appeal must be a written request by the student to the superintendent, asking the superintendent to review the case. Appeals are only considered on disciplinary actions for out of school suspensions of three days or more.

The written request must be received by the superintendent within three calendar days after the student has been found guilty and given the sanction. The student will receive written notification of the time and place of the appeal hearing. The student will remain in good standing and will be permitted to attend school and to ride the school bus until a final determination is made. Such decision will be based on whether or not immediate danger is involved. **Any disciplinary sanction may be reversed; however, the sanction previously imposed cannot be increased.**

PROCEDURE FOR WAIVING APPEALS

In the event a student desires to waive the opportunity for an appeal, when charged with a breach of discipline regulations, he/she may do so. The student must, however, confer with the principal or hearing officer and have the sanction for the offense explained. At that time, the student must sign a waiver of appeal before the designated discipline authority, and the sanction for the particular offense will be imposed by the building administrator. A written record signed by the student and the original waiver executed by the student shall be kept as a record.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14 TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA (Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4[1]	English I, English II
MATHEMATICS	4[2]	Algebra I
SCIENCE	3[3]	Biology
SOCIAL STUDIES	3½	1 World History[4] 1 U.S. History[4] ½ U.S. Government[4] ½ Economics[5] ½ Mississippi Studies[6]
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	½[7]	½ Physical Education
HEALTH	½[8]	½ Contemporary Health
TECHNOLOGY or COMPUTER SCIENCE	1[9]	
THE ARTS	1[10]	
COLLEGE- and CAREER-READINESS	1[11]	
ELECTIVES	5½	
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	24[12, 13, 14]	

APPENDIX B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14 TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA WITH CAREER AND TECHNICAL OR JROTC ENDORSEMENT (Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4[1]	English I English II
MATHEMATICS	4[2]	Algebra I
SCIENCE	3[3]	Biology
SOCIAL STUDIES	3½	1 World History[4] 1 U.S. History[4] ½ U.S. Government[4] ½Economics[5] ½ Mississippi Studies[6]
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	½[7]	½ Physical Education
HEALTH	½[8]	½ Contemporary Health
TECHNOLGY or COMPUTER SCIENCE	1[9]	
THE ARTS	1[10]	
COLLEGE- AND CAREER- READINESS	1[11]	
CAREER and TECHNICAL/JROTC	4	
ELECTIVES	3½	
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	26[12, 13, 14]	

APPENDIX C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14 TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA with an ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT (Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4[1]	English I English II Two (2) additional English Courses above English II
MATHEMATICS	4[2]	Algebra I Two (2) additional Math Courses above Algebra I
SCIENCE	3[3]	Biology Two (2) additional science courses above Biology
SOCIAL STUDIES	3½	1 World History[4] 1 U.S. History[4] ½ U.S. Government[4] ½ Economics[5] ½ Mississippi Studies[6]
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	½[7]	½ Physical Education
HEALTH	½[8]	½ Contemporary Health
TECHNOLOGY or COMPUTER SCIENCE	1[9]	
THE ARTS	1[10]	
COLLEGE- and CAREER- READINESS	1[11]	
ELECTIVES	7½	Must Include two (2) advanced electives of the College Preparatory Curriculum

APPENDIX D

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14
TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA with a DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT
(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4[1]	English I English II Two (2) additional English Courses above English II
MATHEMATICS	4[2]	Algebra I Two (2)additional Math Courses above Algebra I
SCIENCE	4[3]	Biology Two (2) additional science courses above Biology
SOCIAL STUDIES	4	1 World History[4] 1 U.S. History[4] ½ U.S. Government[4] ½Economics[5] ½ Mississippi Studies[6]
PHYSICALEDUCATION	½[7]	½ Physical Education
HEALTH	½[8]	½ Contemporary Health
TECHNOLOGY or COMPUTER SCIENCE	1[9]	
THE ARTS	1[10]	
COLLEGE- and CAREER-READINESS	1[11]	
ELECTIVES	8	Must Include two (2) advanced electives of the College Preparatory Curriculum requirements (This information is available from Institutions of Higher Learning).
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	28 [12,13,14]	

APPENDIX E

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS IN LIEU OF PASSING THE END-OF-COURSE ASSESSMENT MISS. ADMIN. CODE 7-3: 36.5, STATE BOARD POLICY CHAPTER 36, RULE 36.5 (EFFECTIVE 2013 - 2014 SCHOOL YEAR AND THEREAFTER)

Assessment Options	Math	Science	English	Social Studies
ACT	17	17	17	17
Dual Credit/ Enrollment	C or higher in College Algebra	C or higher in College Biology & corresponding lab	Cor higher in College English Comp I	C or higher in College American History II
ASVAB + MS-CPAS OR Industry Certification	ASVAB (PICAT prescreen scores are not allowable) score of 36 **plus** one (1) of the following: 1. *CPAS score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements **OR** 2. Earn approved Industry Certification specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint.			
ACT Work Keys + MS-CPAS OR Industry Certification	WorkKeys Silver Level **plus** one (1) of the following: 1. *CPAS score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements **OR** 2. Earn approved Industry Certification specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint. * Beginning in School Year 2022-2023, the MS-CPAS will no longer be administered.			

APPENDIX F

GRADUATION REQUIREMETS
STANDARD 14 ALTERNATE DIPLOMA OPTION

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS	GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE SUBSTITUTION
ENGLISH	4[1]	Alternate English I	CCR English I
		Alternate English II	CCR English II
		Alternate English III Alternate English IV	CCR English III CCR English IV Broadcast Journalism Debate Foundations of Journalism Mississippi Writers Oral Communications Print Journalism Survey of African American Writing Technical and Workplace Writing World Literature
MATHEMATICS	4[2]	Alternate Math I	CCR Compacted Math 7 CCR Compacted Math Grade 8 with Algebra I (prior to entering HS) Foundations of Algebra (Grade 9 only)
		Alternate Math II	CCR Compacted Math Grade 8 with Algebra I (prior to entering HS) Foundations of Algebra (Grade 9 only) Advanced Technical Mathematics
		Alternate Math III	Advanced Technical Mathematics (must be taken prior to CCR Algebra I)

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS	GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE SUBSTITUTION
			CCR Geometry CCR Algebra II (contingent on passing CCR Algebra I)
		Alternate Algebra	CCR Algebra I
SCIENCE	2	Alternate Biology	Biology
		Alternate Science II	Courses worth 1 Carnegie Unit Physical Science Earth and Space Science Human Anatomy and Physiology Foundations of Biology OR Courses worth ½ Carnegie Unit Environmental Science Genetics

			Geology Zoology I Zoology II Astronomy Botany Foundations of Science Literacy
SOCIAL STUDIES	2	Alternate History	US History
		Alternate Social Studies	Courses worth 1 Carnegie Unit World History Courses worth ½ Carnegie Unit Economics US Government Mississippi Studies Psychology Sociology World Geography
HEALTH	½ [3]	Alternate Health	Contemporary Health Healthcare & Clinical Services I Theory and Application of Health Sciences JROTC I and II
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	½ [4]	Physical Education	Physical Education
CAREER READINESS	4[5]	Career Readiness I-IV	Career Readiness was designed specifically for the Alternate Diploma
LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	4[5]	Life Skills Development I-IV	Life Skills Development was designed specifically for the Alternate Diploma
THE ARTS	1[6]	The Arts	
ELECTIVES	2		Any Carnegie unit credit bearing courses or a combination of ½ Carnegie unit credit bearing courses
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	**24**		

APPENDIX G

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS STANDARD 14
CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

A Certificate of Completion is not a high school diploma or an Alternate Diploma, but rather an acknowledgement of the student's participation in and completion of his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students eligible to receive a Certificate of Completion should fall into one (1) of the following categories:

1. Students without a Significant Cognitive Disability at the end of 8th grade who:
   - Are 16 years old or older; **AND**
   - At least three (3) or more grade levels below their peers in reading and math; **AND**
   - Have a signed statement from the parent acknowledging the Certificate of Completion is not a traditional high school diploma and will not meet the requirements for entry into careers or post-secondary opportunities requiring a diploma.

2. Students without a Significant Cognitive Disability who have not yet turned sixteen (16) by the end of the eighth grade should transition to the ninth grade on a diploma path.

3. Students with a Significant Cognitive Disability at the end of 8th grade who:
   - Have extremely limited or no receptive and expressive communication skills **AND**
   - Have a signed statement from the parent acknowledging the Certificate of Completion is not a traditional high school diploma and will not meet the requirements for entry into careers or post- secondary opportunities requiring a diploma.

4. Students with or without a Significant Cognitive Disability at the end of their third year of high school (6 semesters) who:
   - Have not earned at minimum of 3 English units, 3 math units, 2 science units, 2 social studies units, and 5 electives; **AND**
   - Have a signed statement from the parent acknowledging the Certificate of Completion is not a traditional high school diploma and will not meet the requirements for entry into careers or post-secondary opportunities requiring a diploma; **AND**
   - Have evidence of 3 or more years of intensive intervention implemented in middle and/or high school to earn Carnegie units. Evidence may include, but is not limited to:
     - Progress monitoring data from reading intervention programs or math intervention programs
     - Documentation of accommodations and modifications provided in the general education courses and assessments
     - Course schedules outlining dedicated time for intervention.

The student's IEP committee determines the course of study for the Certificate of Completion. Areas of instruction should be developed based on the unique needs of the individual student. Course work shall be appropriate for the student and may include:

- Intensive remediation in deficit area skills
- Career preparation courses
- Life skills courses

Students earning the Certificate of Completion should have completed at least four (4) years of high school and/or
be at least 19 years of age at the time of graduation.

Students pursuing a Certificate of Completion are required to participate in the Mississippi statewide assessment program deemed appropriate by their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) Committee.