



**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION -
CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION
2025 V3**
Arkansas Department of Education



Organization Information

Organization Name

DRIVEN School of Opportunity

Email

rblackwell@pcssd.org

Telephone

5012342179

Fax

Address

21001 Cantrell Road

Unit/Suite

Zip Code

72223

City

Little rock

State

Arkansas



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1. Applicant Profile Information

Q1.

Name of applicant

DRIVEN School of Opportunity

Q2.

Contact person

1. Full Name

2. Title/Relationship to Charter

3. Mailing Address

4. Primary Phone

5. Primary Contact Email

Rachel Blackwell

Instructional Technology/Digital Learning Facilitator

925 East Dixon Road

Little Rock, Arkansas 72206

501-234-2179

rblackwell@pcssd.org

Q3.

Please list the names and roles of all persons in the applicant group, i.e., anyone with a role in drafting the substantive content of this application and is expected to have a significant role with the school, including any consultants or employees of an education service provider or management organization. Include the following information for each person listed:



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**1. Full Name****2. Current Role with Proposed School****3. Future Role with Proposed School****Rachel Blackwell**

- Instructional Technology/Digital Learning Facilitator
- District Technology Integration Coach

Todd Eskola

- DRIVEN School Lead
- Principal/Director of DRIVEN

Nina Holub

- Robinson High School Instructional Coach/DRIVEN Math Teacher
- Assistant Director of DRIVEN

Q4.

Projected Date of School Opening (Month/Year)

August 2026 for the 2026-2027 School Year

Q5.

Type of Charter

- ☒ Conversion Charter
- ☐ Other. Please explain in the comment section:

Q6.

Educational Model

If your Educational Model is not listed, please use the comment section to write in your response and provide a brief explanation of the model and why you selected that model.



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- ☐ Classical
- ☐ Traditional
- ☐ Virtual
- ☐ Career/CTE
- ☐ Hybrid Learning
- ☐ Performing Arts
- ☐ Special Populations
- ☒ Other: Please explain in the comment section.

Applicant Comments :

DRIVEN School of Opportunity will follow the Mastery Learning Educational Model. Students will have the opportunity to retake learning after following the set process until mastery of the content is demonstrated. Teachers will provide live instruction with shorter class periods than traditional classrooms. Students will have opportunities to work with a tutor and a mentor during Academic Choice. This teaches time-management skills and fosters ownership of their education to meet students' needs.



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2. Executive Summary

Q7.

A.1 Vision and Mission

State the charter school's mission and vision for the proposed school. Provide a clear, focused, and compelling purpose for the school that is measurable and focused on educational outcomes.

a. What specific needs or challenges within the district have led to the decision to pursue a district conversion charter school model?

Please describe the factors—academic, operational, or community-based—that support this request.

b. In what ways is the proposed district conversion charter school expected to positively impact student achievement, educational innovation, or overall district performance?

Include a description of anticipated benefits and how they align with district goals.



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**District MISSION STATEMENT:**

PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AIMS TO SERVE ALL STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH RIGOROUS COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES.

District VISION STATEMENT:

Pulaski County Special School District is committed to creating a nationally recognized school district that assures that all students achieve at their maximum potential through the collaborative, supportive and continuous efforts of all stakeholders (teachers, administrators, support staff, families, students, communities and businesses).

District CORE BELIEF STATEMENT:

We the stakeholder of Pulaski County Special School District, (teachers, administrators, support staff, families, students, communities, and businesses) believe that for all students to succeed:

- We must provide a safe physical, social and emotional learning environment.
- All stakeholders of education must be actively involved.
- Curriculum, instruction and learning opportunities must be diverse, engaging and developmentally appropriate.
- Schools should be communities of learning where all teachers and staff do whatever it takes to assure all students learn.
- All decisions must be data-driven.

a. What specific needs or challenges within the district have led to the decision to pursue a district conversion charter school model?

DRIVEN School of Innovation was established in PCSSD in 2018 to offer students additional educational options to meet their goals. PCSSD was losing students to private, home, and charter schools. The community desired non-traditional options with opportunities for acceleration.

b. In what ways is the proposed district conversion charter school expected to positively impact student achievement, educational innovation, or overall district performance?



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Over the last 7 years, Robinson High DRIVEN school of innovation has shown student growth and success with the mastery learning model. DRIVEN students' ACT scores have been above the district and national averages and have increased every year. DRIVEN School of Innovation has also increased the school/district population each year.

Q8.

B.1 Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement

Describe the anticipated student population the school intends to serve. Provide a rationale for seeking to serve this population.

DRIVEN School of Opportunity will serve approximately 515 motivated 9th-12th-grade students. DRIVEN will be inclusive, serving students with IEPs, 504, and dyslexia. Families interested in our educational model can apply for DRIVEN in the late Fall for the upcoming school year. Applications are graded on a rubric that considers many factors, such as ATLAS, Transcript, teacher recommendations, diversity, and parent involvement.

Q9.

B.2 Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement

Describe the current educational options available to your target population and how a new charter school will impact the available options.

For the last 7 years, DRIVEN has been a school within a school at Robinson High School, starting in 2019 with 100 9th graders and adding a grade level and additional faculty each year. PCSSD offers traditional school models. The new charter school will target students seeking non-traditional school options (mastery learning), shorter class periods, and academic choice time. Managing a school within a school has always been a manageable challenge, but as DRIVEN has grown, the need for its own LEA has become a necessity. DRIVEN will offer all core content classes, including AP and CC. Electives and extracurricular opportunities will be provided through a partnership with Robinson High School.

Q10.



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B.3 Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement

Based on your outreach, research, and knowledge of the student population and community, what are the primary challenges to student success in the area you seek to serve?

Describe how the proposed district conversion charter school will address these challenges through its academic model, support structures, or innovative practices.

During our School of Innovation stakeholder meetings with the community, parents, and students, the primary challenges to student success are....

- Achievement - Families within the community have transferred from PCSSD (specifically the Robinson Feeder) after elementary and middle schools to private or home schools in order to receive a high-level education (as they perceive it).
- Student Behavior/School Culture - Families within the community leave public-school offerings to attend schools in which they feel their student will be safe. While this is often a perception, parents are opting out of our community high school for alternative education.

Our unique scheduling model allows students opportunities for success and support from tutors. The mastery learning model helps students build a strong foundation in core areas, which we've seen helps support them be successful in more rigorous classes.

DRIVEN School of Opportunity, since day one, has focused on school/program culture. We value students and community/family, which is highlighted by the positive culture among our students/staff, in addition to student voice, stakeholder input, and graduate feedback. Pillars of the program are 1) relationships, and 2) trust, which sets the climate of our educational community at one of the top in the state. DRIVEN students are motivated, and we have almost 100% parent involvement.

Q11.

B.4 Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement

What evidence demonstrates community interest and support for establishing a district conversion charter school?

Please describe any meetings, surveys, focus groups, or other forms of outreach that indicate stakeholder



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engagement and community backing for the proposed school.

In the past 7 years, the DRIVEN population has grown from 100 to 500 students. In the last AAA cycle, Robinson High School was named the fastest-growing school in the state. This is due to the DRIVEN program. Every year, we have had a waiting list of students wanting to attend. This year, as we prepare for 2026-2027, we already have more applications than we can accept. Our monthly DRIVEN Parent lunches are just one way we encourage parental involvement. In October, over 85% of our students had at least one parent attend the lunch, and this is a normal attendance number each month for our program. Opportunities like this allow our stakeholders regular opportunities for communication and keeping our "open door" policy to welcome parents and community into our program.



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3. Academic Plan

Q12.

A.1 Academic focus

Describe and outline the proposed school's academic focus. Include specific academic benchmarks, educational philosophy, instructional methods, and innovations.



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DRIVEN School of Opportunity will prepare students for college and career. All non-AP courses are taught at the Honors level. DRIVEN has followed state standards with a rigorous academic curriculum geared towards academic success, strong foundational understanding in core areas, and preparation for upper level classes. DRIVEN also prioritizes life skills (such as changing a tire, communicating with adults, filing taxes, etc.) as well as career training opportunities for our students through guest speakers and job shadowing. DRIVEN has had a 100% graduation rate over the last 4 years. We also plan to have all students graduate with a diploma of merit or distinction.

Academic Benchmarks:

ACT scores - increase in average ACT score for all DRIVEN students over the last 4 years (number of years with student enrollment of grades 11-12)

ATLAS Summative EOC (Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, ELA 9, ELA 10)

Educational Philosophy:

With a foundational belief surrounding mastery learning, the primary goal for 9-10 grade students is to ensure 1) students build a strong fundamental understanding in math, reading, writing, and science, and 2) ensure students are meeting academic success by monitoring grades, as well as ATLAS interim/summative scores, AP enrollment, CC enrollment, and ACT scores.

Instructional Methods:

PCSSD is a 1:1 district with Chromebooks. DRIVEN will utilize technology, and Schoology (LMS) in order to provide video lessons (requirement for all teachers to video lessons and post for student academic use), opportunities for advancement (curriculum resources available for students to advance coursework in core areas), and implement curriculum/instruction aligned with State Standards as assessed on ATLAS EOC. DRIVEN will also utilize tutors (9 classified staff hired as academic tutors) in order to support students academically.

Innovations:

- Mastery Learning - 9th/10th grade students will have unlimited retake opportunities in non-AP core classes. 11th graders will have limited retake opportunities (currently 3) retake opportunities in non-AP core classes.
- Shortened Class Time - Class periods are reduced (currently 25 minutes) in order to afford students opportunities for Academic Choice Time, which is unstructured time for students to access



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tutors, forge peer learning groups, build time management, and make individual choices that support their "why".

- Mentoring - Teacher/staff will act as mentors for DRIVEN students. Mentors will build relationships with students and families, as well as act as support/advocates for students related to academic and non-academic topics.

Q13.

A.2 Academic focus

Describe the school-wide, evidence-based plan that will drive academic improvement for all students and help close achievement gaps. Please provide any relevant research and evidence you used in developing the plan.



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Throughout the School of Innovation process, DRIVEN has developed processes in order to ensure student success (academic achievement and academic improvement) for all DRIVEN students.

The following expectations for students, teachers, and parents are outlined prior to hiring (teachers/staff) or enrolling (students/parents):

All students...

- Know their “why”
- Have value and are important
- Have a voice
- Must take ownership of their education
- Must accept accountability for their actions
- Must be motivated
- Must communicate
- Can learn

Teachers will...

- Be great communicators
- Teach to mastery
- Video their lessons
- Make decisions based on what benefits students
- Develop positive relationships with students
- Be experts in their fields
- Use Wednesdays to reteach and extend lessons - no new material
- Participate in a professional learning community

Parents/Guardians must...

- Be involved
- Support their student and help them take ownership of their education
- Communicate with their student
- Communicate concerns with DRIVEN teachers before they become issues

Being transparent with expectations, helps ensure students/teachers are committed to the core beliefs and learning processes of DRIVEN. Shared vision among teachers/staff supports accountability, retention of students, and focus on student achievement/growth.



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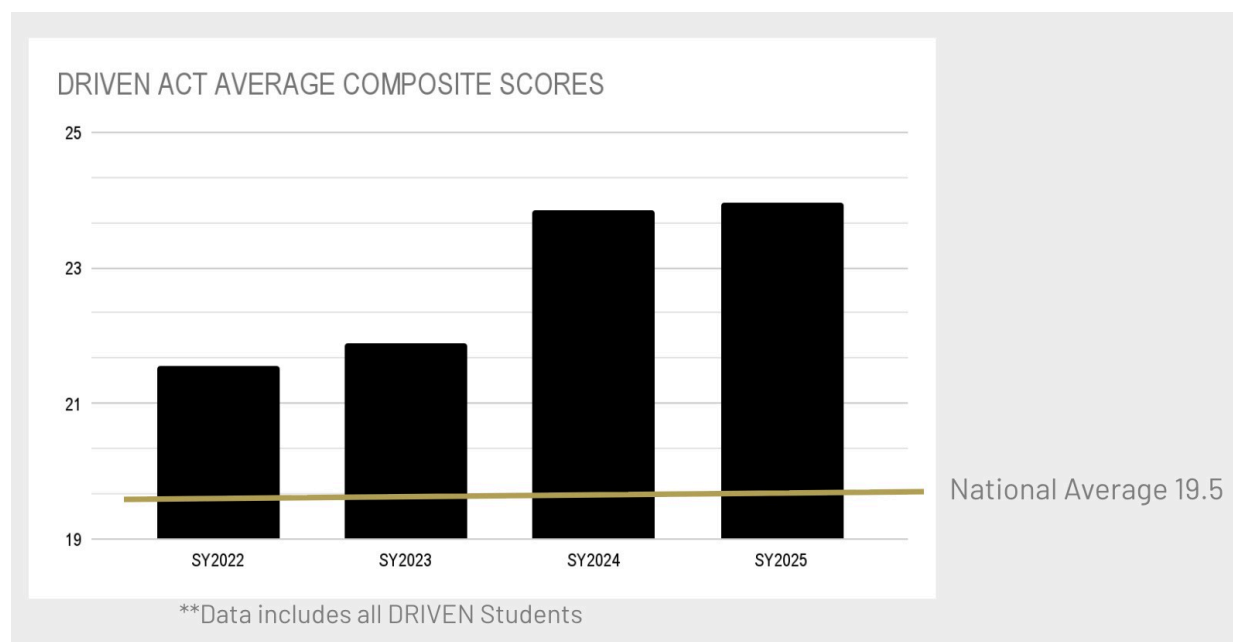


Plan for academic improvement and closing the achievement gap:

- 1) Enroll students that are motivated and know their "why"
- 2) RTI Processes for identified (ATLAS Summative, ATLAS Interim, interim/quarter grades, teacher insight) students involves use of tutors, academic choice time, mentoring, and mastery learning processes. Teachers will meet on a regular basis in order to identify struggling students. Identified students will meet with school admin/leadership, as well as parent(s)/guardian(s) to develop a plan for intervention. Possible interventions include loss of academic choice time (assigned to a tutor small group support), increased communication between teachers/admin/student, and/or one-on-one support.

Evidence:

Standardized tests have changed over the last several years, but DRIVEN has documented ACT scores. Each year, the student average has increased.



Q14.

A.3 Academic focus

Describe the school's curriculum and discuss how it will prepare students to meet or exceed Arkansas standards.



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- a. If the curriculum is fully developed, summarize curricular choices, and explain the rationale for selection. If the curriculum still needs to be fully developed, describe any curriculum decisions made to date, share any proposed curricular decisions that are pending, and explain the process for completion.**
- b. Provide evidence or documentation that the literacy curriculum chosen is based on the science of reading. Describe your strategy for students reading at or above grade level or higher and your strategy for students reading below grade level.**

a) **DRIVEN School of Opportunity will follow PCSSD curriculum and pacing guides, in addition to College Board (AP). DRIVEN will also utilize Schoology (LMS) in order to organize curriculum in a way that supports students/teachers.**

b) Savvas is the current literacy curriculum for PCSSD, which has programs explicitly aligned to the Science of Reading. In order to extent learning for students reading at or above grade level, staff will continue to encourage and support student-formed book clubs, use advisory/mentor time once-per-week for independent reading, as well as develop habits of reading and writing through classroom instruction and activities. For students reading below grade level, teachers will use scaffolding as well as other intervention strategies in the classroom; tutors will also be utilized during Academic Choice Time in order to support low-level readers.

Q15.

A.4 Academic focus

Describe the professional learning opportunities and support provided to educators to implement the described academic plan.

Teachers will participate in content-level PLCs, as well as planning days to ensure students are 1) identified (based on testing data), 2) supported (through differentiation and one-on-one/small group support), and 3) continually assessed (to measure growth/achievement).

Q16.

A.5 Academic focus



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Explain the proposed master schedule. Describe why this schedule will be optimal for student learning. Summarize how the school will plan time for teacher development, tiered interventions, enrichment, tutoring, acceleration, and other academic activities.

DRIVEN School of Opportunity will follow the PCSSD academic calendar and the master bell schedule. DRIVEN will modify the 7-period day to create 14 small block class sections. An example of a master schedule is shown below (attached).

DRIVEN teachers will attend weekly PLCs. DRIVEN will have individual tutor rooms focused on content to support the lowest one-third of students, in line with our success plan. Tutoring, acceleration, and academic activities can all be monitored and achieved in our academic choice offerings.

Q17.

A.6 Academic focus

Upload a copy of the proposed annual academic calendar and proposed master schedule.

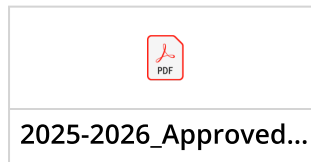
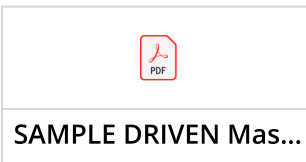
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Applicant Comments :

Attached is a sample master schedule. Allocations will account for changes, but this gives the authorizing panel an idea of format.

PCSSD had not adopted a 2026-2027 district calendar. Once approved, DRIVEN will follow the same schedule.

Applicant Evidence :



Uploaded on **12/3/2025** Uploaded on **12/3/2025**
by **Rachel Blackwell** by **Rachel Blackwell**



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Q18.

B.1 Academic Performance

Explain the process for setting, monitoring, and revising academic performance Include in your response how the proposed school will use data to improve instruction, inform professional development, and evaluate curriculum.

Setting Academic Performance: DRIVEN School of Opportunity will set academic performance goals based on ATLAS Summative and/or ACT scores from the previous year(s), as well as student goals (student success plans). Instruction will be tied to state standards for content, with a focus on reviewing standards identified as low-performing on previous tests.

Monitoring Academic Performance: DRIVEN School of Opportunity will utilize ATLAS Interims, ATLAS-aligned formative assessments, and/or ACT-aligned formative assessments to measure student growth/achievement. By incorporating spiral-review strategies (including standards identified as low-performing from previous tests) and targeting standards on the ATLAS blueprint, teachers will be able to monitor the effectiveness of their instruction as measured against ATLAS (ELA 9, ELA 10, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology).

Revising Academic Performance: DRIVEN staff will adjust student schedules - including Academic Choice Time - to ensure students are in classes that meet their academic needs and/or have one-on-one/small group tutoring required for students with identified gaps and/or low-performing areas. Through monitoring academic performance, teachers/administrators can evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, which will inform professional development and curriculum needs.

Q19.

B.2 Academic Performance

Describe the grade-level promotion/retention policies for students.

DRIVEN School of Opportunity will follow PCSSD grade-level promotion/retention for students.



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4. School Climate

Q21.

A.1 Describe the intended school climate/environment. Explain how that climate will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development.

1. Include in your explanation how the climate for students, teachers, administrators, and parents will be established.
2. Include in your explanation how the school climate will be supportive of students with a variety of needs, including students receiving special education services, English language learners, gifted and talented students, and students who are at risk of academic failure.

DRIVEN is based on positive relationships and trust among faculty, students, and parents. We believe our school climate is one of the best in the state. We establish this before students are enrolled in our school by requiring a parent meeting. At this meeting, we explain what DRIVEN is, and parents determine whether it is the best fit for their students. DRIVEN is inclusive of students with IEPs, dyslexia, ELL, 504 plans, hearing impairments, etc. We have a large number of gifted and talented students who need to be challenged academically. Parent, teacher, and student relationships keep our community abreast of potential concerns among our stakeholders, and we are intentional about seeking both student and parent voices to help develop solutions. Our mentor meetings and focus on providing each student with an "individualized education" help those with different learning needs be fully supported on their educational journey.

Q22.

A.2 Describe the school's approach to discipline, behavior intervention, and classroom management. Highlight key policies, systems, and related structures and address how they will support the climate described in question 1 and will comply with Arkansas laws.



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DRIVEN School of Opportunity will follow PCSSD Student Handbook and PCSSD policies, including policies related to discipline, behavior intervention, and classroom management.

In addition, DRIVEN School of Opportunity will also focus on positive relationships, including staff-student mentorship. Mentors will act as a trusted adult, which has shown to reduce discipline issues by fostering positive relationships, building social-emotional capacity in students, and creates a "safe space" within the school.

Q23.

A.3 Briefly explain the general plan to engage parents in school life and communicate with them regularly about school matters.

Our parents receive a weekly email newsletter from DRIVEN with upcoming dates and events. Parents are encouraged to attend Academic Nights and Scholarship Info Nights, as well as attend monthly DRIVEN students' lunches. We have seen outstanding participation at each of these events, particularly at our monthly parent lunches, which help build a sense of community in our program. DRIVEN will have a parent council for feedback and input, in addition to a Parent Teacher Organization for teacher & student support.

Q24.

A.4 Will the school offer any extra and/or co-curricular activities? If so, please describe.

Yes, our school will partner with Robinson High School for both elective classes and extra curricular activities.

Q25.

A.5 Briefly explain and describe the school's policy concerning how the school will address grievances and complaints. Include what role the governing board may have in complaints. Upload a copy of the current handbook (if possible) describing those policies and procedures.




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DRIVEN School of Opportunity will address grievances and complaints in accordance with the PCSSD handbook.

Applicant Evidence :


2025-2026_student_h...

Uploaded on **12/8/2025**
by **Rachel Blackwell**



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5. Financial Plan and Fiscal Sustainability

Q26.A.1 Indicate the number of students the charter school intends to serve for each year of the initial charter term. What data and factors were used to determine the demand for the school and the projected enrollment provided? For each school year in the initial charter term please provide the following

1. School Year (e.g. Year One, Year Two, etc.)
2. Grade Levels offered per school year
3. Total projected Student Enrollment for all grades per school year (min, anticipated, max)
4. Faculty projections based on anticipated enrollment per school year
5. Non-faculty projections based on anticipated enrollment per school year



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We plan to enroll between 500-515 students in the DRIVEN School of Opportunity in the fall of 2026. We are limited to that number by facility restrictions. We already have more applicants for enrollment than we can accept. We will offer grades 9-12.

Our enrollment will be directly tied to our facility space, as provided by PCSSD. As facility space increases, our enrollment is projected to increase to the limits of the facility.

Faculty projections are as follows for year 1:

English - 4

Math - 4

Science - 4

Social Studies - 3

Freshman Seminar - 1

Special Education - 1

Math Instructional Coach - 1

ELA Instructional Coach - 1

Counselor - 1.5

Librarian/Testing Coordinator - 1

Principal - 1

Asst Principal - 1

Non- Certified Faculty Projections for year 1:

Full Time Tutors - 5

Part Time Tutors - 4

Secretary/Attendance - 1



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Secretary/ Registrar - 1

Bookkeeper - 1

Nurse - 1

SRO / Security - numbers pending

Custodian - numbers pending

Q27.

A.2 Provide a startup budget and a three-year budget forecast beginning July 1 of year 1, necessary to sustain the successful startup of the school. Include revenue projections, expenses, and anticipated fund balances. Upload a copy of the startup and three-year projected budgets.

a. Include in your budget analysis the line-item revenue and expenditure assumptions on which the operating and start-up budgets are based. This description should include the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and expenses. Provide sufficient information to guide a full understanding of how budgetary figures were determined.

b. Describe any anticipated state and federal funding sources the school expects to receive in addition to per-pupil foundation funding. In addition to these alternative income sources, clearly explain the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income (grants, donations, fundraising).

DRIVEN School of Opportunity will work with the PCSSD business office to set the budget.


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Applicant Evidence :


rpt510_AFRB_Level_1....

Uploaded on **12/8/2025**

by **Rachel Blackwell**

Q28.

A.3 If the budget is contingent upon funding sources beyond those typically provided by the state and federal government, provide evidence of such funding.

NA

Q29.A.4 Explain how the school will remain fiscally sustainable and describe the school's emergency plan for cash flow challenges, a budget shortfall, lower-than-expected enrollment, or other financial challenges in the early years of operation.

DRIVEN School of Opportunity will be a part of PCSSD.

Q30.

A.5 Describe how the annual operating budget will be developed and refined each year in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-306 (10). Please include how resource allocation decisions are aligned with organizational improvement priorities, student achievement data, and mission-driven priorities.

DRIVEN School of Opportunity will work with the PCSSD business office to set an annual operating budget.



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6. Appendix A ARKANSAS STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

Please review the Statement of Assurances (see Appendix A) and acknowledge with your signature that they will be addressed through policies adopted by the charter school or sponsoring entity.

As an authorized representative of the applicant group, I hereby certify that under the penalties of perjury, the information submitted in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. Further, I understand that if awarded a charter, the school and its charter school board will address the assurances listed below through policies adopted by the sponsoring entity and charter school board. In addition, if the application is approved, the charter school board, administration, staff of the charter school, and educational service provider shall comply with all relevant state and federal laws in addition to the assurances listed below.

1. The charter school shall be open to all students on a space-available basis and shall not discriminate in its admission policy on the basis of gender, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or academic or athletic eligibility, except as follows: the charter school may adopt admissions policies that are consistent with state and federal law, regulations, or guidelines applicable to charter schools. The charter may provide for the exclusion of a student who has been expelled from another public school district.
2. If applications exceed the approved enrollment cap, the open-enrollment charter school shall hold an annual random and anonymous public lottery, followed by notifying parents of the enrollment status of all applicants. The waiting list generated by the lottery is valid until the next time the open-enrollment public charter school is required to conduct a random, anonymous student selection in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-306 (14)(B)(b)(2).
3. The charter school shall comply with all applicable laws concerning the recruitment, hiring, promotion, retention, or termination of its employees.
4. The charter school shall operate in accordance with federal laws and rules governing public schools, applicable provisions of the Arkansas Constitution, and state laws and regulations governing public schools not waived by the approved charter.
5. The charter school shall not use the money that it receives from the state for any unlawful sectarian program, obligations, or activity or as collateral for debt except as allowed by law.
6. Charter schools may enter public-private partnerships where they enter into a lease-purchase agreement for the acquisition or construction of a school building or related facilities built or acquired by private entities exempt from federal taxes under 26 U.S.C. 142(a)(13) as allowed by Ark. Code Ann. 6-20-402(a)(1)(B).
7. The charter school shall not impose taxes or charge students' tuition or fees that are not allowable by law
8. The charter school shall not be religious in its operations or programmatic offerings in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. 6-23-401(a)(7) or as otherwise allowed by law.



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9. The charter school shall ensure that any of its employees who qualify for membership in the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System or the Arkansas State and Public-School Employee Insurance Program are covered under those systems to the same extent required by law.
10. Under applicable state laws, the employees and volunteers of the charter school are immune from liability to the same extent as other public school district employees and volunteers.
11. The charter school shall carefully review the potential impact of its application on the efforts of a public school district or public-school districts to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 (a).
12. The charter school shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local health and safety laws, rules, and regulations regarding the facilities and school property.
13. The applicant confirms the understanding that certain provisions of state law shall not be waived. The charter school is subject to any prohibition, restriction, or requirement imposed by Title 6 of the Arkansas Code and any rule and regulation approved by the State Board of Education under this title relating to (a) Monitoring compliance with Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-101 et seq., as determined by the Commissioner of the Department of Education; (b) Conducting criminal background checks for employees; (c) High school graduation requirements as established by the State Board of Education; (d) Special education programs as provided by this title; (e) Public school accountability under this title; (g) Health and safety codes as established by the State Board of Education and state and local governmental entities, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. 6-23-401(b).
14. No indebtedness of any kind incurred or created by the charter school shall constitute an indebtedness of the state or its political subdivisions. No debts of the charter school shall involve or be secured by the faith, credit, or taxing power of the state or its political subdivisions, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. 6-23-503. Upon dissolution of the charter school or nonrenewal or revocation of the charter, all net assets of the charter school, including any interest in real property purchased with public funds, shall be deemed the property of the state unless otherwise specified in the charter of the charter school. If the charter school used state or federal funds to purchase or finance personal property, real property, or fixtures for use by the charter school, the authorizer may require that the property be sold. The state has a perfected priority security interest in the net proceeds from the sale or liquidation of the property to the extent of the public funds used in the purchase.
15. The school's curriculum will be aligned with the Arkansas Academic Standards.
16. The school will operate within the statewide assessment system.
17. The Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Financial Management System, provided by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, shall be the original and official accounting system of record for the public charter school as required by state law and the rules and regulations of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education for all financial transaction records and reporting (including, but not limited to, payroll processing and wage and tax reporting to the IRS ATRS, DFA, etc., accounts payable, fixed assets, personnel budgeting, and budgeting). APSCN shall be used to record all private, as well as local, state, and federal revenues and expenditures.
18. The charter school shall comply with Ark. Code Ann. §6-24-105-107 concerning contracting with charter school board members, administrators, and employees.
19. The Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Student Management System, provided by the Department of Education, shall be the original and official student management system for the public charter school as required by state law and the rules and regulations of the Department of Education for



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all student management areas (including, but not limited to, systems administration, demographics, attendance, scheduling, report cards, discipline, medical, Cognos reporting, and Statewide Information System reporting).

20. The facility to be used will comply with all applicable accessibility requirements in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and all other state and federal laws and local zoning ordinances.
21. Should your charter school application be approved, the charter school board must be incorporated as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Arkansas . Additionally, the charter school board will be expected to obtain Federal 501(c)(3) status. A copy of the charter school board's application for Federal 501(c)(3) status must be included with the application. The charter school board must receive formal tax-exempt status under §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 prior to the first day of its operation with students.

To the best of my knowledge, I certify that the information and data contained in the application are true and correct. The applicant will comply with the Arkansas Statement of Assurances for Charter Schools and all State and Federal laws guiding Charter Schools in Arkansas unless granted a waiver. The charter school board and any educational service providers affirm and acknowledge the information and affirmations presented in this application.

Q31.

Type your name.

Rachel Blackwell

Q32.

Type your job title.

Digital Learning Faciliator/Instuctional Technology

Q33.

Verify the above statement by signing.



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Signature

[Handwritten signature]



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7. Addendum – Virtual or Blended Operator

Q34.

Will you be a virtual or blended operator?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No

Q35.

Explain the rationale for opening and authorizing the online school.

NA

Q36.

How will authorizing the online school benefit the current student population of Arkansas?

NA

Q37.

Describe the role of the teachers within the online learning environment.

NA

Q38.

Verify by your signature below that the proposed school will abide by the following high-quality standards for online instruction:

1. The Online School involves representatives of the Online School's community, as well as staff, in a collaborative process to develop and communicate the Online School's vision, mission, goals and results in a manner appropriate to the online model for that program. The



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Online School provides leadership, governance, and structure to support this vision, and these supports are used by all staff to guide the decision-making.

2. The Online School has a plan and timeline to accomplish the technological infrastructure capable of meeting the needs of students and staff and supporting teaching and learning. The Online School uses a variety of technological tools and has a user-friendly interface. The Online School meets industry-accepted accessibility standards for interoperability and appropriate access for learners with special needs. Technological support structures and programs are in place to reduce barriers to learning for all students.

3. The Online School has and implements a technology plan that includes (but is not limited to) documentation that all students and Parents know and understand the acceptable use of the Internet in accordance with all federal and state statutes. When providing direct services (for example, ISP, computer equipment or "at location") to students, the Online School will use filtering software to prevent access to inappropriate materials.

4. Online Schools must comply with all statutory requirements, including the existing budgetary reporting procedures under state law, as well as being consistent with the format required by the authorizing entity. Budgets and accounting records must be transparent, open to the public, and demonstrate support for student academic achievement.

5. Online School demonstrates levels of attainment of statewide performance indicators that Meet expectations established by the Department's annual performance review.

6. The Online School's Teachers use ongoing, research-based formative and summative assessments to measure student academic performance. Students have varied opportunities to demonstrate mastery of skills, show academic progress, and receive meaningful feedback on their learning.

7. The Online School has a policy regarding course completion.

8. The Online School follows policies for tracking attendance, participation, and truancy. The policy includes documentation of Teacher/student interaction.

9. The Online School has a policy and the infrastructure to store, retrieve, analyze, and report required student, teacher, financial, and other required data collections.

10. The Online School has a policy of providing guidance counseling services as appropriate to grade level and student needs.



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11. The Online School has a policy guiding school/home communication about student and program progress, school governance, and school accountability that is relevant, regular, and available in the native language where reasonable.

12. Instructional strategies, practices, and content address various learning needs and styles of students. The Online School uses a body of evidence to identify advanced, under performing, economically disadvantaged, or other special needs students. The Online School will work to ensure that support structures and programs, including but not limited to Title I, ESL, Special Ed. and Gifted and Talented are integrated into the school's instructional program to promote and support student learning.

13. The Online School evaluates the degree to which it achieves the goals and objectives for student learning. There is a systematic process for collecting, disaggregating, managing, and analyzing data that enables the Online School's leadership, teachers, parents, students, community members, and other stakeholders to determine areas of strength and challenge. The data collected are analyzed using a systems approach, and the analysis includes the use of the school performance reports.

14. The Online School shall ensure that background checks in accordance with law are performed on all volunteers and paid staff, including but not limited to mentors, teachers, administrators or any other persons in unsupervised contact with the student, except parents supervising their children's educational program.

15. The Online School has an established policy to conduct virtual home visits to enhance school-family engagement.

Signature



**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION -
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Final Status

☐ Reject ☐ Approve

Approver Comments

DRIVEN

SCHOOL OF OPPORTUNITY

Getting to Know DRIVEN School of Opportunity

- 1003 RHS Total/470 DRIVEN SOO = 47%

School Year	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
2019-2020	100			
2020-2021	60	100		
2021-2022	60	55	85	
2022-2023	68	60	55	86
2023-2024	105	83	57	45
2024-2025	119	113	95	81
2025-2026	148	122	103	100

Foundational Beliefs

- **Mastery Learning**
 - Unlimited Retakes (9th & 10th)
- **Shorter Classes**
- **Acceleration/Flexibility**
- **Next Steps**
 - Career Readiness and Networking
 - Scholarship Applications
 - College Application Process
- **Mentoring**
 - Relationships
- **Academic Choice Time**
 - Time Management Skills
- **Tutoring**
- **Student Agency**
 - DRIVEN Council
 - Flex Days/Job Shadow/College Visits
- **Know Your “Why”**
- **Non Exclusive**
 - IEPs, 504, Dyslexia

All Students...	Teachers will...	Parents must...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Know their “why”● Have value and are important● Have a voice● Must take ownership of their education● Must accept accountability for their actions● Must be motivated● Must communicate● Can learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Be great communicators● Teach to Mastery● Video their lessons● Make decisions based on what benefits students● Develop positive relationships with students● Be experts in their fields● Use Wednesdays to reteach and extend lessons - no new material● Have DRIVEN PLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Be involved● Support their student and help them take ownership of their education● Communicate with their student● Communicate concerns with DRIVEN teachers before they become issues

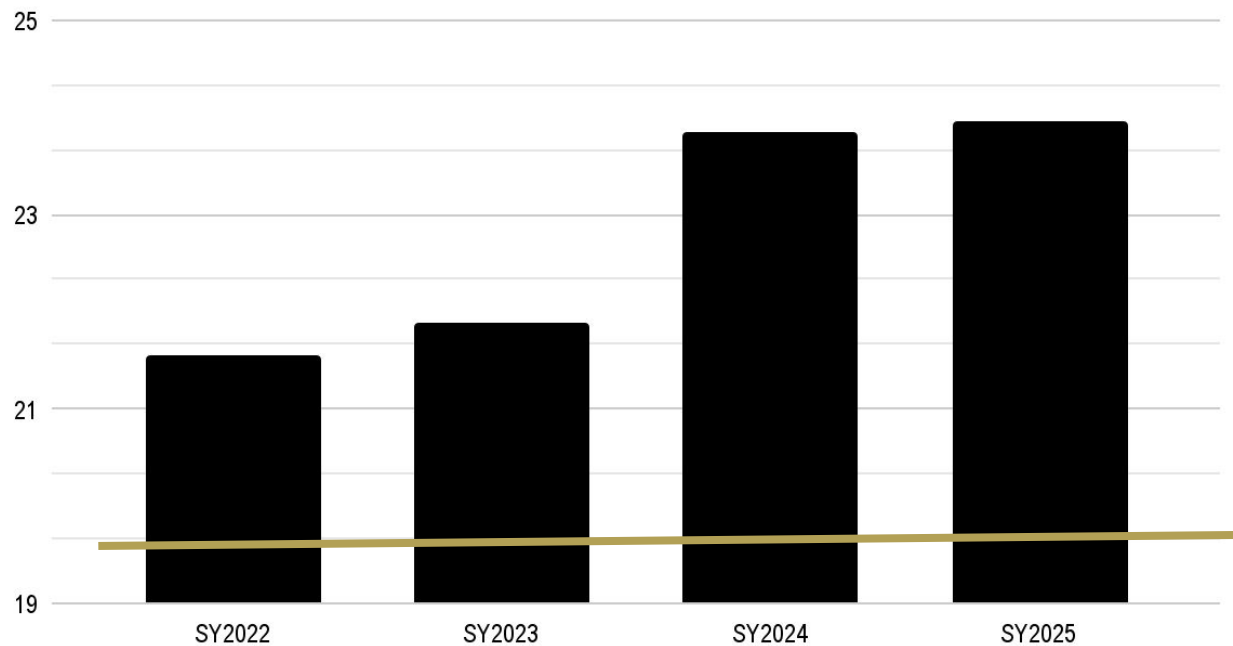
DRIVEN PERIODS	
1A	Geometry
1B	ACT
2A	Manufacturing
2B	
3A	ACT
3B	Anatomy
4A	AP US History
4B	
5A	English 2
5B	ACT
6A	Spanish 2
6B	
7A	ATHLETICS
7B	

Student Schedule Example

Curriculum/Assessment

- Teach According to State Standards
- Teach at a Honors Level
 - With goal of students taking AP and CC Courses
- Live Teach Everyday
 - Teachers video lessons for students to use as a resource
 - Students have the opportunity for acceleration in any course, however, classes are not designed to be asynchronous.
- Assess using ATLAS Interim/Summative, CFAs, and classroom assessments
- We use “Non Traditional/Outside the Box” strategies to achieve results
- AP classes follow requirements of college board

DRIVEN ACT AVERAGE COMPOSITE SCORES



National Average 19.5

**Data includes all DRIVEN Students

GOAL #1: Improve Academic Performance

Graduation Rates

100% Graduation Rates

ACT Composite Scores

Scores for ACT would continue to improve (Higher than state & national averages), including improvements in math, which is our lowest scoring area.

Honor Roll Achievements

60% or above for all DRIVEN Students will be on Honor Roll

Student GPAs

An average of 3.6 or higher for all DRIVEN Students will be on the Honor Roll. Cumulative GPA would continue to improve as we gain more knowledge and experience in scheduling, offer more AP courses in DRIVEN,

ATLAS assessments

60% or above for all DRIVEN Students will be at a Level 4: Advanced understanding or Level 3: Proficient understanding on the ATLAS assessments.

Acceleration

Document students who are working ahead of scheduled courses.

GOAL #2: Student Agency

Progress Monitoring Survey of Academic Choice Time

Survey Quarterly at Interim, looking for a) growth from one semester to the next in time spent on academic tasks (homework, studying, reading), and b) greater than 65% of students participating in academic tasks during academic choice time.

Graduate Feedback

Annually, the survey was completed by more than 30% to gain insight into the development of the program.

Student Success Plans

Reviewed Annually. Students do tasks & activities inside the SSP monthly. Mentors will review at least once a year.

Student Climate Survey

Once each semester, look for a) improvement in areas of student satisfaction and b) greater than 80% completion of the survey.

DRIVEN

SCHOOL OF OPPORTUNITY

Class	Time	Math Teacher	Math Teacher	Math Teacher	Math Teacher	Science Teacher	Science Teacher	Science Teacher	English Teacher	English Teacher	English Teacher	History Teacher	History Teacher	History Teacher
1A	8:30 - 8:55	Alg 1	AP Calculus	Statistics	AP Stats	Biology	AP Bio	Chemistry	CC Eng	Eng 4	Eng 2	X	X	World History
1B	8:57 - 9:22	X		Pre-Cal		Phys Sci		Chemistry	Eng 9	AP LAng	AP Lit	Civics	APUSH	Civics
2A	9:25-9:55	Geometry	Alg 3	Geometry	Alg 2	Biology	Anatomy	Envir Science	Eng 9			Civics		US History
Mentor	10:00 - 10:24	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting	Mentor Meeting
2B	10:26 - 10:50	Alg 1	Quant Lit	Geometry	Alg 2	Phy Sci	X	Chemistry	Eng 9	Eng 3	Eng 2	Civics	AP Psych	World History
3A	10:55 - 11:19	Geometry	Coll Alg	Pre Cal	Geometry	Biology	Biology	Chemistry	Eng 9	AP Lang	AP Lit	Civics		Civics
3B	11:21 - 11:45	Geometry	X	Statistics	Geometry	Biology	X	Chemistry	Eng 9			Civics	AP World	US History
4A		LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
4B		Geometry	Coll Alg	X	Geometry	Biology	AP Bio	X	X	AP LAng	Eng 2	X	APUSH	Civics
5A	1:15 - 1:39	Geometry	X	Stats	Geometry	Phys Sci		Envir Science	CC Eng		Eng 2	Civics		US History
5B	1:41 - 2:05	Alg 1	Alg 3	Pre-Cal	X	X	Anatomy	Chemistry	Eng 9	Eng 3	Eng 2	Civics	AP World	World History
6A	2:10 - 2:34	X	Alg 3	Alg 2	Geometry	Biology	AP Env Sci	AP Chemistry	Eng 9	Eng 4	X	AP Gov	APUSH	x
6B	2:36 - 3:00	Geometry	Quant Lit	Alg 2	Geometry	Phys Sci			X	X	X			x
7A	3:05 - 3:29	CC Math	Athletics	X	X	X	Athletics	X	Eng 9	X	Eng 2	Athletics	CC History	Athletics
7B	3:31 - 3:55		Athletics	Geometry	Alg 2	Biology	Athletics	Envir Science	Eng 9	Eng 4	Eng 2	Athletics	x	Athletics

PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT CALENDAR 2025-2026																														
MONTH	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	STUDENT DAYS	TEACHER DAYS			
JULY 2025			1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21	22	23	24	25	28	29	30	31					
AUGUST					1	{ PD	PD	PD	PD/CP	CP	[*]						18	19	20	21	22	25	26	27	28	29	15	20		
SEPTEMBER	1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15	16	17	18	19	PC	22	23	24	25	26	29	30				20	21		
OCTOBER			1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	13	14	15	16	17	48]	OC/FLEX	20	21	22	23	24	27	28	29	30	31	13 + 9	22	23
NOVEMBER	3	4	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	OC/FLEX	OC/FLEX	24	25	26	FB	FB	27	28				15	17	
DECEMBER	1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15	16	17	18	19	39]	WB	WB	WB	WB	WB	WB	WB	WB	WB	WB		15	15	
JANUARY 2026				1	WB	PD	5	6	7	8	9	12	13	14	15	16	MLK	19	20	21	22	23	26	27	28	29	30	18	19	
FEBRUARY	2	3	4	5	6	9	10	11	12	13	PC	16	17	18	19	20	23	24	25	26	27						19	20		
MARCH	2	3	4	5	6	9	10	11	12	13	47]	16	17	18	19	20	SB	SB	SB	SB	SB	30	31				10 + 7	17	17	
APRIL			1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	13	14	15	16	17	20	21	22	23	24	27	28	29	30		22	22			
MAY					1	4	5	6	7	8	11	12	13	14	15	18	19	20	44]	PD	22	25	26	27	28	29	15	16		
JUNE	1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15	16	17	18	19	22	23	24	25	26	29	30								
LEGEND	[*]	1st Day for Students						WB	Winter Break						FB	Fall Break						PC	Parent Conference						178	190
	{	Teachers First Day						CP	Classroom Preparation						SB	Spring Break						}	Teachers Last Day						TOTAL	TOTAL
]	End of Quarter						PD	Prof. Development																					
								OC/FLEX	Off Contract/Prof. Development																					

Non Work Days (former Board Holidays)

Administrative Days

Non Work Days (Twelve Month Administrators)

Non Work Days (Twelve Month Support Staff)

Any make up days needed, including those required by Act 1469 of 2009 (for days unavoidable lost due to disease outbreaks, inclement weather or other acts of God)

First Quarter

48 days

Second Quarter

39 days

Third Quarter

47 days

Fourth Quarter

44 days

PD - Professional Development

CP/PD - Classroom Prep/Professional Development

SC/PC - Student Contact 1/2 day a.m./Parent Conference 1/2 day p.m.

Flex/PD - Teachers can receive 30 hrs. of PD credit for PD taken Off Contract which is due by May 1.

Any Out-of-district PD requires prior principal approval.

Teacher Days - 190 days

Student Days - 178 days



PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026



Where to go for more information

- A child's teacher is the best source of information for questions about the teaching and learning activities taking place in the classroom.
- The school principal can answer questions about the overall school program and school activities. A copy of the Board of Education Policy Manual is available on the District website, www.pcssd.org.
- If a child is required to take medicine at school **in order to attend school**, the school nurse or school office staff will provide the forms required before the medicine may be administered by school employees.
- If a parent needs information about school organizations, call the school or Central Office at 501-234-2000.

PCSSD 2025-2026
PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK



PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PARENT/STUDENT STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

Student Name _____ Grade _____

School _____

The Pulaski County Special School District has made available the Parent/Student Handbook Including Student Conduct online for viewing and downloading. The Handbook is available at www.pcssd.org > Menu > Documents > Families > District Handbooks > 2025-2026 Parent/Student Handbook.

We acknowledge that we have been informed that the PCSSD Parent/Student Handbook is located online and available for viewing and downloading. We have also been informed of our right to request a hard copy of the Parent/Student Handbook.

We have received the PCSSD Parent/Student Handbook and although we may not agree with all the regulations, we understand that the student must adhere to them while he/she is at school, on the bus, at the bus stop, or in attendance at school-sponsored activities. In the event that we are not entirely certain of some aspect of school policy, we will contact the principal for clarification within 1 week after receipt of that policy.

The signatures below certify that you and your student received information in regard to accessing the Parent/Student Handbook from the school he/she attends. Please sign and return to the student's homeroom teacher within 1 week after the student receives it.

☐ I would like to receive a hard copy of the Parent/Student Handbook.

Student Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

ARKANSAS GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

For current Arkansas Graduation Requirements, please visit dese.ade.arkansas.gov

Note: The Student Success Plan (SSP) will be used in lieu of Smart Core documents.

English – 4 credits

- ADE-Approved English 9 – 1 credit*
- ADE-Approved English 10 – 1 credit*
- ADE-Approved English 11 – 1 credit*
- ADE-Approved English 12 – 1 credit*

Mathematics – 4 credits

- Algebra I – 1 credit
- Geometry – 1 credit
- Algebra II or Quantitative Reasoning – 1 credit
- ADE-Approved Mathematics or [Computer Science Flex](#) – 1 credit*

Science – 3 credits

- ADE-Approved biology – 1 credit*
- ADE-Approved physical science – 1 credit*
- ADE-Approved third science or [Computer Science Flex](#) – 1 credit*

Social Studies – 3 credits

- ADE-Approved US History – 1 credit*
- ADE-Approved World History – 1 credit*
- ADE-Approved Civics – 0.5 credit*
- ADE-Approved Economics and Personal Finance – 0.5 credit*

Oral Communications* – ½ credit

Physical Education* – ½ credit

Health and Safety* – ½ credit

Fine Arts* – ½ credit

Career Focus* – 6 credits

Additional Graduation Requirements

- An AR graduate must earn credit in a course that includes Personal and Family Finance Standards in grades 9-12. – A.C.A. § 6-16-135
- An AR graduate must pass with a 60% on the Arkansas Civics Exam. – A.C.A. § 6-16-149
- An AR graduate must complete CPR training. – A.C.A. § 6-16-143
- An AR graduate shall complete a minimum of 75 clock hours of documented community service in grades 9-12; **requirement begins for 2027 graduates**. – A.C.A. § 6-16-1901
- An AR graduate must earn one credit of ADE-Approved Computer Science or computer science-related career and technical education course; **requirement begins for 2026 graduates**. – A.C.A. § 6-16-152

*Category course options as listed on the ADE Smart Core Course Code List

****Computer Science – (optional)** A flex credit of an approved computer science (any course starting with 465 or 565) may replace the 4th math requirement or the 3rd science requirement. Two distinct credits of the approved computer science courses may replace the 4th math requirement and the 3rd science requirement. Once the 4th math requirement and the 3rd science requirements have been met, any additional computer science credits will be recognized as Career Focus credits.

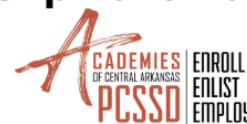
Schools should develop Students Success Plans (SSPs) beginning in 8th grade for all students in accordance with Smart Core requirements.

Arkansas Department of Education—March
2025

Academy/AVID 9th-12th Grade Field Trip Permission Slip 2025-2026



Pulaski County Special School District
Form Due by Friday, August 29, 2025



Academy/AVID experiences enable 9th-12th grade scholars to engage with business/industry leaders, explore college and career possibilities, and visualize themselves in a workplace setting. These experiences aid in providing college and career readiness, so students are prepared for post-secondary success.

2025-2026 Academy/AVID Events include but are not limited to: Business/Industry Tours, Career Exposure Events, the LR Career Expo, College Visits, Job Shadowing, Draft Day, Ambassador Events, Pathway exploration opportunities, Pledge to Graduate, AVID Senior Seminar, etc.)

(PLEASE PRINT)

Student's Name: _____

School: _____ **Grade:** _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Parent's/Guardian's Name: _____

Home/Cell Phone: _____ **Work Phone:** _____

Parent's Email: _____

Check one of the following boxes, and fill in the requested information. Then sign below.

☐

YES, I, (Parent/Guardian) _____, **give**

permission for my scholar, (Scholar's name) _____, to participate in **any Academy/AVID Field Trip Experience** that requires PCSSD transportation to an off campus location. I also understand and give permission for my child's picture, image, and/or video to be taken during this Academy/AVID event and used by the business sponsoring the event and PCSSD.

☐

NO, I, (Parent/Guardian) _____, **do NOT give permission** for

my scholar, (Scholar's name) _____ to participate in **any Academy/AVID Field Trip Experience** that requires transportation to an off campus location.

Date and Time of Event: Prior to an Academy/AVID Event, parents will be notified of date, time, location, and lunch options. *When notified, parents will be given the opportunity to opt-out of an experience.*

Lunch: If needed, scholars will have the option of ordering a sack lunch from the school cafeteria or bringing a sack lunch from home. (Cost may apply.)

Location of Events: Academy/AVID Events are in a variety of locations inside the state of Arkansas

Cost of the field trip: No cost

Academy Sponsors: PCSSD Academy/AVID Teachers and/or Academy Coach/Director, AVID Coach/Director

Mode of Transportation to and from event: PCSSD School Transportation

- I understand and have made my scholar aware that Academy/AVID events, activities, and experiences related to it are school-related functions, and that all the rules and regulations from the District and School Handbook apply.
- I understand and agree that if my scholar violates these rules and regulations, the handbook will be followed, and I may be required to pick him/her up from the Academy/AVID Event location.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Including Conduct and Discipline

Jeff Senn
Superintendent

Pulaski County Special School District
925 East Dixon Road
Little Rock, Arkansas 72206
501-234-2000
www.pcssd.org

Board of Education Disclaimer Statement

Use of the masculine pronoun throughout the policies adopted by this Board is for the sole purpose of ease in sentence construction and should not be construed as Board intention to discriminate against females in either its written materials or its practices. The feminine pronoun will be used only in those policies where the masculine form would be totally inappropriate. (Adopted 10/12/82)

For Your Information

Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD) shall adhere to the policies set forth in the Parent/Student Handbook for student conduct and discipline, as revised after consultation with appropriate standing committees, to ensure that students are disciplined in a fair and equitable manner.

Discipline Management Plan Statement

The Discipline Management Plan is a specific initiative to address the District's goal of eliminating disparities in school discipline by providing discipline management options that do not involve a disruption of education services.

Health and Safety Disclaimer

PCSSD, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to amend, alter, modify, or supplement the regulations contained herein the Parent/Student Handbook with or without prior notice. PCSSD will comply with all rules and regulations from the Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Department of Education, and the Centers for Disease Control.

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Section I. General Information



FOREWORD

This document has been prepared for the purpose of outlining to you the expectations of the PCSSD School District in regard to student conduct.

The district recognizes that students are guaranteed full rights of citizenship by the United States Constitution; and these rights may not be denied except in accordance with due process of law. The district further recognizes that with these rights there are responsibilities which are designed to help all participants acquire the full benefits of the educational program, regardless of race, sex, creed, or national origin.

It is impossible to list in this handbook all of the rules and guidelines for students and staff use. Therefore, the contents of this handbook should not be construed to limit or deny your rights and responsibilities on your own campus as a member of the student body or as a citizen, neither should it be construed as limiting or denying your principal the right and responsibility to develop such necessary rules and regulations that are not inconsistent with federal and state laws and Board of Education policies and regulations.

State law (6-18-505) requires documentation of student and parent receipt of student discipline policies. Each school principal will provide the required forms that students and parents must sign. By doing so, parents and students are signifying that they have received the Parent/Student Handbook including Conduct and Discipline and are aware of the District's rules, policies and procedures. Parents will also have the option of downloading the Handbook from the PCSSD School District website.

Jeff Senn
Superintendent

The Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD) is honored to have your student and your family work with us in building an educational institution where excellence thrives throughout all our schools. As a public school district, we serve the interests of the individual student as well as the community of learners who walk through our doors each day. Here at PCSSD our goal is to ensure that excellence in academics and excellence in co-curricular activities is achieved.

This handbook is provided to you because we believe that students and their parents have a right to know the rules and consequences of the Pulaski County Special School District. PCSSD Board of Education adopted discipline guidelines that are fair and equitable to ensure all students are provided a quality education. The policies and procedures addressed in this handbook are critical to establishing an environment conducive to learning at each school and throughout the District. It is impossible to list a rule for every situation that may arise at school, on the bus, or school sponsored activities. Therefore, students and parents must expect rules and practices to be developed that meet local, state, and federal guidelines. These regulations will be communicated to students and parents. It is imperative that each student and parent/guardian is knowledgeable of these rules of conduct.

State law (A.C.A. § 6-18-505) requires documentation (a signed form) of student and parent receipt of student discipline policies. By doing so, parents and students are signifying they have access to the Parent/Student Handbook and are aware of the District's rules, policies, and procedures. Parents have the option of downloading the handbook from the [Pulaski County Special School District](#) website. We look forward to our continued partnership.

Janice H. Warren, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

A. School Visitors (See [Board Policy 6.5](#))

Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, grandparents, businesses, and community members are welcome and encouraged to visit District schools. To minimize the potential for disruption of the learning environment, visitors, for a purpose other than to attend an activity open to the general public, are required to first report to the school's main office. No one shall be exempt from this requirement. Visitors who are Level 3 or Level 4 sex offenders may only enter a school campus under the provisions listed in [Policy 6.10](#).

Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis are encouraged to participate in regularly scheduled visitation events such as school open houses and parent/teacher conferences. Additional conferences are best when scheduled in advance. Conferences shall be scheduled at a time and place to accommodate those participating in the conference. Visits to individual classrooms during class time are permitted on a limited basis with the principal's prior approval and the teacher's knowledge.

Visitors, including parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, wishing to speak with students during the school day shall register first with the office. Visitors, including parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, who visit the school for school-sanctioned events may use a device for the purpose of recording audio or video or take photographs to capture performances or the like, which includes their child(ren).

Visitors to the school are directed not to use a device to:

- Record audio or video or take photographs in areas where a general expectation of personal privacy exists, including but not limited to locker rooms and bathrooms; or
- Create, send, share, capture, or post audio, video, or photographs of District students unless the visitor:
 - Has received permission to do so from someone authorized to grant such permission on behalf of the student or the student if the student is 18 years old;
 - Received authorization from the District to do so on behalf of the District; or
 - Is required to do so as part of the individual's job duties, including as a member of the media.

The District has the right to ask disruptive visitors to leave its school campuses. If disruptive visitors refuse to leave school property when requested to do so, principals are authorized to seek the assistance of law enforcement officers.

B. Contact with Students While at School (See [Board Policy 4.15](#))

Contact by Parents

Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis who wish to speak to their children during the school day must first register with the office.

Contact by Non-Custodial Parents

If there is any question concerning the legal custody of the student, the custodial parent shall present documentation to the principal or his/her designee establishing the parent's custody of the student. It shall be the responsibility of the custodial parent to make any court ordered documents or other restrictions regarding the non-custodial parent known to the principal by presenting a copy of a file marked court order. Without such a court order on file, the school will release the child to either of his/her parents. Non-custodial parents must provide the principal a date-stamped copy of current court orders granting visitation in order to eat lunch, volunteer in their child's classroom, or otherwise have contact with their child during school hours.

The transfer of a child between his/her custodial parent and non-custodial parent, when both parents are present, cannot take place on school property on normal school days during normal hours of school operation, unless prior arrangements have been made with the principal.

Contact by Law Enforcement, Social Services, or by Court Order

Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) employees, local law enforcement, or agents of the Crimes Against Children Division of Arkansas State Police, may interview students without a court order for the purpose of investigating suspected child abuse. In instances where the interviewers deem it necessary, they may exercise a 72 hour hold without first obtaining a court order. Except as provided above, other questioning of students by non-school personnel shall be granted only with a court order directing such questioning, with permission from the parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis of a student (or the student if above 18 years of age), or in response to a subpoena or arrest warrant.

If the District makes a report to any law enforcement agency concerning student misconduct or if access to a student is granted to a law enforcement agency due to a court order, the principal or the principal's designee shall make a good faith effort to contact the student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis. The principal or designee shall not attempt to make such contact if presented documentation by the investigator that notification is prohibited because a parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis is named as an alleged offender of the suspected child maltreatment. This exception applies only to interview requests made by a law enforcement officer, an investigator of the Crimes Against Children Division of Arkansas State Police, or an investigator or employee of DHS.

In instances other than those related to cases of suspected child abuse, principals must release a student to either a police officer who presents a subpoena for the student or a warrant for arrest, an agent of state social services, or an agent of a court with jurisdiction over a child with a court order signed by a judge. Upon release of the student, the principal or designee shall give the student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis notice that the student has been taken into custody by law enforcement personnel or a state's social services agency. If the principal or designee is unable to reach the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis, he/she shall make a reasonable, good faith effort to get a message to the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis and leave both a day and an after-hours telephone number.

Contact by Professional Licensure Standards Board Investigators

Investigators for the Professional Licensure Standards Board may meet with students during the school day to carry out the investigation of an ethics complaint.

C. Search and Seizure (See [Board Policy 4.32](#))

Students have the right to be protected from unreasonable search and seizure by state, federal, or school officials.

School administrators have the responsibility to make a determination of the point at which the student's right to protection against unreasonable search and seizure is in conflict with the administrator's official duty to maintain a safe, orderly, and efficient school. Search and seizure by an administrator may occur when reasonable suspicion exists.

A student's person and/or personal effects may be searched whenever a school authority has reasonable and individualized suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis must pick up confiscated possessions such as, but not limited to, electronic communication devices by the end of each semester.

If a pat-down search of a student's person is conducted, it shall be conducted in private by a school official of the same sex in the presence of an adult witness of the same sex.

Search and seizure by law enforcement officials will occur only when a probable cause exists. School administrators have the responsibility to make students aware of search and seizure procedures involving

school property or person.

On the day of a search, metal detectors will be used for general scanning in all schools to search all students who are present. School employees who are not wearing ID badges and patrons may be subject to scanning when entering a school building during the day. All individuals may be subject to general scanning when entering buildings, gymnasiums, and stadiums for events and activities scheduled outside the school day. If weapons or illegal substances are found during the process of scanning, District policy, local, state, and federal laws will be followed.

Procedures for scanning are as follows:

1. Each principal will have a prepared plan for general scanning in their buildings.
2. The conduct of scan searches will follow these listed procedures:
 - a. The metal detector will be passed over the student on each side, front, and back.
 - b. If any metal is registered, the student may be:
 - i. instructed to empty his/her pockets;
 - ii. instructed to pull up his/her pant leg so that socks and shoes may be checked;
 - iii. asked to take off jackets to be hand searched;
 - iv. asked to submit purses/book bags for search; or
 - v. asked to turn a belt buckle over to expose the backside in order to ensure that no weapon is concealed.

Once the object that caused the alarm is located, and the alarm does not sound when passed over the student, the search will stop.

3. If after completing these procedures there is still a reasonable belief that the student is concealing a weapon on his/her person based on the sounds produced by the metal detector, the student may be asked to accompany an administrator to the office. In the privacy of an office and with an administrator and employee of the same sex present as a witness, the student will be asked to produce any weapon or metal items on his/her person. At no time will a strip search be conducted.

If the above measures do not yield the object that is causing the detector to indicate the presence of an object, then the student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis will be contacted and the student will be detained until the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis comes to school. If the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis will not or cannot aid in locating the object that is present, the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis will be informed that police will be contacted for assistance.

4. The media will not be present during scanning activities, nor will pictures be taken of students who are being scanned.

D. Interrogation and Removal from School by Legal Authorities (See [Board Policy 4.32](#))

Students have the right to be advised of their rights:

- to know why they are being questioned;
- to remain silent;
- to know that anything he/she says may be held against him/her in court;
- for the interrogation to take place in the presence of an official school representative; and
- not to be removed from school unless he/she has been observed violating a law by a law enforcement officer, or the official school representative is presented a warrant or other valid order for arrest.

The principal or designee shall give the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis notice that the student has received a request to be interviewed, has been reported to or taken into custody by law enforcement personnel.

If the principal or designee is unable to reach the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis, he/she shall

make a reasonable, good faith effort to get a message to the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis and leave both a day and an after-hours telephone number.

School administrators have the responsibility to initiate proceedings for removing students from the school by legal authorities when the student becomes uncontrollable or disruptive.

E. Arkansas Activities Association Eligibility Requirements

Student athletes are subject to the eligibility requirements of the Arkansas Activities Association and PCSSD. Please see your coach or athletic director if you have any questions.

F. Non-Curricular Activities/Equal Access (See [Board Policy 4.12](#))

Non-curriculum-related secondary school student organizations wishing to conduct meetings on school premises during non-instructional time shall not be denied equal access on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings. Such meetings must meet the following criteria:

1. The meeting is to be voluntary and student initiated;
2. There is no sponsorship of the meeting by the school, the government, or its agents or employees;
3. The meeting must occur during non-instructional time;
4. Employees or agents of the school are present at religious meetings only in a non-participatory capacity;
5. The meeting does not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school; and
6. Non-school persons may not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend activities of student groups.

All meetings held on school premises must be scheduled and approved by the principal. The school, its agents, and employees retain the authority to maintain order and discipline, to protect the well-being of students and faculty, and to assure that attendance of students at meetings is voluntary.

Fraternities, sororities, and secret societies are forbidden in the District's schools. Membership to student organizations shall not be by a vote of the organization's members, nor be restricted by the student's age, race, creed, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, or veteran status. Hazing, as defined by law, is forbidden in connection with initiation into, or affiliation with, any student organization, extracurricular activity, or sport program. Students who are convicted of participation in hazing or the failure to report hazing shall be expelled.

G. Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Plans (See [Board Policy 6.11](#))

PCSSD understands the importance of involving parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, families, and the community as a whole in promoting higher student achievement and general goodwill between the District and those it serves. Therefore, the District shall strive to develop and maintain the capacity for meaningful and productive parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis, family, and community engagement that will result in partnerships that are mutually beneficial to the school, students, parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, families, and the community. To achieve such ends, the District shall work to:

1. Involve parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, families, and the community in the development of the long-range planning of the District;
2. Give the schools in the District the support necessary to enable them to plan and implement effective parental, family, and community engagement activities;
3. Have a coordinated engagement program where the engagement activities of the District enhance the involvement strategies of other programs such as Head Start, HIPPY, Parents as Partners, Parents as Teachers, ABC, ABC for School Success, area Pre-K programs, and Even Start;
4. Explain to parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, families, and the community the state's academic and achievement standards, state and local student assessments, and how the District's curriculum is aligned with the state's academic standards and assessments and how

parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, families, and the community can work with the District to improve students' academic achievement;

5. Provide parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and families with the materials and training they need to be better able to help their child achieve. The District may use parent resource centers or other community-based organizations to foster parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis and family engagement and provide literacy and technology training to parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis;
6. Educate District staff, with the assistance of parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, in ways to work and communicate with parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and to know how to implement parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, family, and community engagement programs that will promote positive partnerships between the school and parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, families, and the community;
7. Keep parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, families, and the community informed about parental, family, and community engagement programs, meetings, and other activities they could be involved in. Such communication shall be, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and families can understand;
8. Find ways to eliminate barriers that work to keep parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and families from being involved in their child's education. This may include providing transportation and childcare to enable parents to participate, arranging meetings at a variety of times, and being creative with parent/teacher conferences;
9. Find and modify other successful parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, family, and community engagement programs to suit the needs of our district;
10. Train parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, families, and the community to enhance and promote the involvement of other parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, families, and members of the community; and
11. Provide reasonable support for other parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, family, and community engagement activities as parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, families, and the community may reasonably request.

To ensure the continued improvement of the district's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis, family, and community engagement program, the District will conduct an annual review of its parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis, family, and community engagement policies to examine their effect on promoting higher student achievement. The review shall be done by a committee consisting of parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and other community members, certified and classified staff, and member(s) of the administration.

Goal 1

The District fosters effective parental involvement strategies and supports partnerships among schools, parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, and the community to improve student achievement.

- PCSSD's Title I Parent Coordinator will foster effective parental involvement strategies, coordinate parental involvement activities with those of other programs, and support partnerships among the school, parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, and the community to improve student achievement.
- The District Parent Involvement Policy will be placed on the PCSSD homepage for parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis to access the plan.
- Each school will establish a Parent Facilitator to oversee Parental Involvement implementation.
- A survey (annual review) of the effectiveness of the parental involvement policy will be utilized to get feedback. The Parental Involvement Survey from the previous year will be analyzed to meet the needs of the parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis better.
- In addition, a perception survey will be sent to all parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis to determine perceptions of each school's effectiveness.
- PCSSD will reserve a minimum of 1% of the District's Title I, Part A allocation for parental involvement.

- Schools will involve parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis in annual meetings led by the school's parent involvement facilitator to review the school Parent Involvement Plan.

Goal 2

The District provides coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement.

- The English as a Second Language Coordinator will ensure, to the extent possible, that information is sent home in a language and form that parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis can understand.
- Each school's parent involvement policy is posted on the district website, which provides translation into 12 different languages.
- The Title I Parent Coordinator will enhance the awareness and skills of teachers, student service personnel, principals, and staff in reaching out to, communicating with, and working with parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis as equal partners.
- The District will monitor each Title I, Part A school to ensure that each school performs the following tasks:
 1. The school parent facilitator will assist with the development of the school's parental involvement policy. The school parent facilitator will provide an electronic copy of the school's parent involvement policy to the District Title I Parent Coordinator. Each school's plan will be placed on PCSSD's webpage and will be distributed at school parent involvement meetings.
 2. School Parent Facilitators will offer flexible meeting times.
 3. Each school's parent facilitator and principal will provide information to parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis about the school's program.
 4. Each Title I school's parent facilitator and principal will develop and use the School-Parent Compact, which describes how the school staff, parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement.
 5. Provide training for parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis in working with their children to improve academic achievement.
 6. Encourage parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis to visit/volunteer at school by assisting staff in developing volunteer opportunities as well as training staff to encourage and build volunteer efforts.
 7. Encourage parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis participation through creative scheduling of activities through strategies such as holding meetings at a variety of times in the morning or evening.
 8. The school's parent facilitator will provide materials and training to help parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis work with their children to improve academic achievement. Each Title I school will provide the dates of the training, the topics that will be covered, the name of the facilitator, and their contact number in their individual school plan.
- Parental Involvement training will be held to train Parent Facilitators on effective Parental Involvement practices. Parent Facilitators will take the information back to the local school.
- Training will be conducted to train Administrators in every building in dealing with better ways of Communicating with Parents.

Goal 3

The District builds the school's capacity for strong parental involvement.

- The school's parent facilitator and principal will provide information to participating parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis in such areas as national, state, and local education goals, including parents' rights as defined in Title I, Part A.
- The school's parent facilitator will assist in developing parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis engagement groups at their school.
- The District Title I Parent Coordinator and school parent facilitators will involve parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis through an annual survey to improve school effectiveness.
- Approve reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parental involvement activities.

- Provide any reasonable support for parental involvement at the request of participating Title I, Part A schools.

Goal 4

The District conducts, with the involvement of parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, an ongoing evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy as it relates to strategies for increasing parental participation and identifying barriers to greater participation.

- The District Title I Parent Coordinator will survey parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis annually, including questions to identify obstacles to parental involvement.
- The Parent Advisory Council, which will include: parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, teachers, and community leaders, will meet annually to review the Parental Involvement Plan.
- The District Title I Parent Coordinator will coordinate the meeting and make recommendations and provide suggestions as it relates to parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis involvement.
- Develop procedures for collecting parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis participation documentation through sign-in lists for workshops, meetings, and conferences; schedules, brochures, meeting notes, and other means as appropriate throughout the school year.

Goal 5

The District will involve parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis in the joint development of the District Title I Application under section 111.

- The Federal Programs Coordinator will recruit parents to serve on the district ACSIP committee to develop the Title I Application.

To ensure the continued improvement of the District's parental/community involvement program, the District will conduct an annual review of its parental involvement policies to examine their effect on promoting higher student achievement. The review shall be done by a committee consisting of parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and other community members, certified and classified staff, and member(s) of the administration.

This policy shall be part of the school's Title I plan and shall be distributed to parents of the district's students and provided, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

H. Non-Discrimination Policy

PCSSD does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, race, color, national origin or gender in any service, program or activity (including in admission, access, treatment, employment, or vocational opportunities.)

In keeping with the requirements of federal law, state law, and applicable court order, the District will strive to remove any vestige of discrimination in the employment, assignment, and promotion of personnel; in educational opportunities and services offered students; in student assignment to schools and classes; in student discipline; and in location and use of facilities.

No student in PCSSD shall, on the grounds of age, race, creed, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, or veteran status be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any educational program or activity sponsored by the District.

The District simply will not tolerate discrimination that includes misconduct by employees toward students that includes, but is not limited to, the singling out and/or different treatment of individual students or groups of students, and any other harassment based on age, race, creed, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, or veteran status. Any student who believes he/she has been subjected to discrimination should report the incident immediately to the school principal or to the District office listed below. The District will investigate.

PCSSD reminds all employees of their duty to report all allegations of discrimination based on age, race, creed,

color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, or veteran status immediately upon becoming aware of them to the designated department listed below. Students and employees who are found to have engaged in acts of discrimination, and employees who fail to report suspected discrimination to the designated department listed below, will be promptly disciplined. That discipline may include, if circumstances warrant, suspension or expulsion of a student and suspension or termination of an employee. Additionally, students or employees who retaliate against individuals who report discrimination will be promptly disciplined.

Inquiries concerning this policy may be referred to:

Dr. Janice Warren
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Pulaski County Special School District
925 E. Dixon Road
Little Rock, AR 72206
501-234-2015
jwarren@pcssd.org

I. Student Dress and Grooming (See [Board Policy 4.25](#))

The general standards of appearance for students are that they are clean, neat, and properly dressed. They are to observe modes of dress, styles of hair, and standards of personal grooming which are in conformity with the studious atmosphere necessary in schools. It is the responsibility of each principal to see that no student's dress is extreme to the point of creating a disturbance of the educational atmosphere. If the principal or the teacher determines that a student's dress or grooming is unacceptable, adequate time will be allowed for the student to make proper adjustments. However, if a student continues to ignore acceptable standards, the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

A student will not practice a mode of dress that disrupts the educational process, calls attention to the individual, violates federal, state, or local law, or affects the welfare and safety of students and teachers. Furthermore, students are prohibited from obscene, lewd, or vulgar comments or designs and wearing clothing directed toward or intended to threaten, intimidate or demean an individual or group of individuals as well as items advertising alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs.

All schools will provide parents with a copy of the dress code. Secondary students are required to wear District-issued ID badges that are visible during school and on the bus.

J. Evacuations

In order to be better prepared in case of an emergency, PCSSD has diligently formed an evacuation plan for each school. In addition to locating an alternate school to which we can transport your child, the District's Emergency Preparedness Committee has also developed some districtwide rules that will be implemented in the event that your child must be relocated due to an emergency (e.g. chemical spill, plane crash, train derailment, etc.)

1. Immediately upon notification of an evacuation order, school administrators and teachers will begin loading students onto buses and sending them to the receiving school. There will be at least 1 teacher on each bus.
2. Once the sending school has been notified of the need for evacuation, no student will be released to his/her parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis until the child has been checked in at the receiving school.
3. No student will be allowed to be removed from a bus at any time.
4. Once at the receiving school, administrators and teachers will begin checking students in and releasing students to parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis as quickly as possible.
5. Your child will only be released to someone other than a parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis if that person has a written consent containing the parent/guardian/person standing in loco

parentis's signature.

6. Once the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis arrives at the alternate location, there will be information on how to most effectively check out your child, including where to go, traffic instructions, and how to secure your child.

If your child attends school at the receiving school, a parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis may check out his/her child following the usual procedures, unless otherwise notified. Please be aware that traffic flow may be altered, as well as pick-up sites, in order to accommodate the sending school's students.

Please know that the safety of your child is our first concern and that we will try to do everything possible to keep your child calm and safe during any emergency.

K. Student Transfers (See [Board Policy 4.4](#))

Intradistrict Permit Application to Transfer

Students may be allowed to transfer to a different school within the PCSSD attendance zone by completing an intradistrict permit application. All permitted transfers provided by these exceptions will be subject to program capacity at the school to which the transfer is requested and student assignment guidelines. Transportation is not provided. The District reserves the right to revoke any permit due to attendance and/or student conduct violations.

Arkansas Public School Choice Act of 2015

Students may be allowed to transfer to a non-resident school district for school attendance pursuant to the Arkansas Public School Choice Act of 2015. Transportation is not provided. Applications are accepted between January 1 and May 1 of each school year for the following school year.

Overflow Transfers

The District reserves the right to assign students to a neighboring school within the District when capacity has been reached at the attendance zoned school. Transportation is provided.

L. Medicaid Billing for Hearing and Vision Screenings

Hearing and vision screenings are provided as required by Arkansas state law for students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th grades, transfer students, new students, referrals by teacher, or parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis request. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis will be notified if further examination by a doctor is indicated. The intent of the exams or screenings is to detect possible deficits in hearing and/or vision that would adversely affect the student's ability to achieve his/her full potential.

Medicaid will be billed, where applicable, for hearing and vision screenings conducted by the District. Your child's confidential information cannot be disclosed without your consent. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), parental consent must be obtained before the school district discloses your child's personally identifiable information to DHS, Division of Medical Services, Arkansas Medicaid, or Medicaid billing agencies for the purpose of billing for Medicaid reimbursement. The personally identifiable information that may be disclosed could include: student's name, date of birth, social security number, Medicaid ID, disability, Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and evaluations, type of service(s), times and dates services were delivered, and progress notes.

Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis who wish to withdraw consent allowing the district to seek Medicaid Reimbursement for vision and hearing screenings should do so by May 31 of each school year by completing the following [PCSSD Parent/Guardian Withdrawal of Consent for Medicaid Billing For Vision and Hearing](#).

M. Parental Notice to Access Public Insurance

Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis of a child with a disability are provided rights and protections under Part B of IDEA to make an informed decision about giving consent to allow the District to access your or your child's public benefits or insurance, such as Medicaid, to help pay for health services provided by the District. This information must be provided before the District obtains your consent for the first time and annually thereafter. These rights include:

1. Your child's confidential information cannot be disclosed without your consent. Under FERPA and IDEA, parental consent must be obtained before the District discloses your child's personally identifiable information to DHS, Division of Medical Services, Arkansas Medicaid, or Medicaid billing agencies for the purpose of billing for Medicaid reimbursement. The personally identifiable information that may be disclosed could include: student's name, date of birth, social security number, Medicaid ID, disability, IEP and evaluations, type of service(s), times and dates services were delivered, and progress notes.
2. Your child has a right to special education and related services at no cost to you. This means that, with regard to services required to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to an eligible child under IDEA, the District:
 - a. May not require parents/guardians/person standing in loco parentis to sign up for, or enroll in, public benefits or insurance programs in order for their child to receive FAPE;
 - b. May not require parents/guardians/person standing in loco parentis to incur an out-of-pocket expense such as the payment of a deductible or co-pay amount incurred in filing a claim for services provided, but may pay the cost that the parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis otherwise would be required to pay;
 - c. May not use a child's benefits under a public benefits or insurance program if that use would:
 - i. Decrease available lifetime coverage or any other insured benefit;
 - ii. Result in the family paying for services that would otherwise be covered by the public benefits or insurance program and that are required for the child outside of the time the child is in school;
 - iii. Increase premiums or lead to the discontinuance of benefits or insurance; or
 - iv. Risk loss of eligibility for home and community based waivers, based on total health related expenditures.
3. You may withdraw consent at any time. Once you have given consent for disclosure of confidential information about your child to DHS, Division of Medical Services, Arkansas Medicaid, or Medicaid billing agencies, you have a legal right under the FERPA and IDEA regulations to withdraw that consent at any time.
4. If you refuse to provide consent for the disclosure of personally identifiable information for the purpose of billing Medicaid, or, if you give consent but then later withdraw consent, that does not relieve the District of its responsibility to ensure that all required services under IDEA are provided at no cost to the parents/guardians/person standing in loco parentis.

N. Backpacks

Backpacks for students in grades K-12 must be clear or mesh.

Section II. Academics



A. Curriculum and Evaluation

Students have the right to a meaningful curriculum, to express their opinion in its development, and access guides and course outlines.

Students have the responsibility to meet the requirements of graduation and/or plan of study, to seek counsel and direction in determining education goals, and to work with the teacher to try to resolve any conflicts which might arise. School staff members have the responsibility to recognize the individuality of those students seeking their advice and counsel, to make known to students and the community the broad scope of special instructional programs available in the District, and to work with students to try to resolve conflicts.

Students have the right to know what is expected of them in class in order to receive a specific grade, to be graded fairly, to receive both academic and citizenship grades, to be informed of unsatisfactory work, and to be provided suggestions for improvement.

Students and parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis have the right and responsibility to initiate conferences with teachers concerning student classroom performance. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis have the responsibility to respond promptly to teacher notification of unsatisfactory academic performance or unsatisfactory conduct on the part of the student.

Both students and teachers have the right to be treated with dignity.

B. Parent-Teacher Conferences (See [Board Policy 5.15P1](#))

Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis will be informed concerning the progress of their student. Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged and may be requested by parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis or teachers. If the progress of a student is unsatisfactory in a subject, the teacher will attempt to schedule a parent-teacher conference to explain the reasons for difficulties and develop, cooperatively with the parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, a plan for remediation, which may enhance the probability of the student succeeding. The school will also send or make available timely progress reports and issue grades for each 9 week grading period to keep parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis informed of their student's progress.

C. Grading (See [Board Policy 5.15P1](#))

Grades measure academic progress. Elementary schools will use report cards appropriate to the grade level being reported. Secondary grades will be reported by computer printout. Grades are assigned to students based on the extent to which a student has achieved the academic objectives of the course. The Arkansas Department of Education also allows for grades to be issued based on student learning expectations.

The grading scale for all schools, as provided by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) [Rules Governing Grading and Course Credit](#), shall be as follows:

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

The grade point values for AP, approved courses for weighted credit, International Baccalaureate (IB), and approved honor courses shall be 1 point greater than for regular courses, with the exception that an F shall still be worth 0 points.

The final grades of students who transfer in for part of a semester will be determined by blending the grades earned in the District with those earned outside the District. Each final grade will be the sum of the percentage of days in the grading period transferred from outside the District, times the transferred grade from outside the District, plus the percentage of days in the grading period while in the District, times the grade earned in the District.

Example: The grading period had 40 days. A student transferred in with a grade of 83% earned in 10 days at the previous school. The student had a grade of 75% in our District's school earned in the remaining 30 days of the grading period. 10 days is 25% of 40 days while 30 days is 75% of 40 days. Thus the final grade would be $.25(83) + .75(75) = 77\%$ or $(0.25 \times 83) + (0.75 \times 75) = 77\%$.

Elementary Education

PCSSD recognizes that the reporting system at the elementary level did not coincide with the Arkansas Academic Standards that are now mandated to be used in Arkansas public schools. The District worked on a new reporting system for Kindergarten through third grade. The reporting system is now standards-based. A rubric will be used to report student progress and the level of mastery that each student has obtained. Specific standards at each level will be marked for each student once every 9-week grading period. Standards-based report cards will be issued in grades K-3. It is the intent of the District that the reporting system is more comprehensive and provides K-3 students and parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis with more defined information on the academic progress of each student at those grade levels. Letter grade report cards will be issued in grades 4 and 5.

Secondary Education

Principals, in conjunction with teachers and other district and campus staff, shall determine the criteria for factoring student grades on their campus. This criteria is to be explained to students and parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis. For purposes of conversion of grade points into letter grades, quality points will be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Middle School Courses

1. A student must have the arithmetic mean using the following formula that results in a 60% or above in order to pass a semester/class. $[9 \text{ weeks grade} + 9 \text{ weeks grade}]/2 = \text{semester percentage}$
 - a. Example: A student earns an 84% for the 3rd 9 weeks and a 91% for the 4th 9 weeks. The two grades are added together to 175. Then, the total of 175 would then be divided by 2 resulting in 88%
2. In regular courses student grade points are based on the numerical value of grades as follows:
A = 4 points
B = 3 points
C = 2 points
D = 1 point
F = 0 points

High School Credited Courses

1. To pass a course a student must have the arithmetic mean using the following formula that results in a 60% or above (provided the appropriate amount of seat time was obtained). $[9 \text{ weeks grade} \times 2 + 9 \text{ weeks grade} \times 2 + \text{semester test}]/5 = \text{semester percentage}$
 - a. Example: A student earns an 84% for the 3rd 9 weeks, a 91% for the 4th 9 weeks, and a test score of 88%. The 5 grades will be added together resulting in 438. Then, the total of 438 will be divided by 5 resulting in a final grade of 88%.
2. In regular courses, student grade points are based on the numerical value of grades as follows:
A = 4 points

B = 3 points
C = 2 points
D = 1 point
F = 0 points

Students enrolled in high school credited courses, including those offered at the middle school level, qualify to be exempt from taking the semester test in a class when they have:

1. maintained at least a "B" average for the semester;
2. 4 or less unexcused absences; and
3. not been suspended from school.

Semester grades for exempt students will be determined by an average of the two quarters (9 weeks).

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses (See [Board Policy 5.21](#))

Students who take AP courses or concurrent credit college courses approved for weighted credit by the DESE will be graded on the same grading scale.

For the purpose of determining grade point averages, the numeric value of each letter grade shall be:

A = 5 points
B = 4 points
C = 3 points
D = 2 points
F = 0 points

For a student to be eligible to receive weighted credit for an AP course:

- The course must be taught by an Arkansas licensed teacher who has received the appropriate training required by Arkansas statute and DESE rule or, for an AP teacher, is in the process of completing an additional training plan; and
- The student takes the applicable AP examination after completing the entire course. Credit shall be given for each grading period during the course of the year, but shall be retroactively removed from a student's grade for any course in which the student fails to take the applicable exam. Students who do not take the applicable exam shall receive the same numeric value for the grade he/she receives in the course as if it were a non-AP course.

Students who transfer into the district will be given weighted credit for the AP courses approved by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), or concurrent college courses taken for weighted credit at his/her previous school(s) according to the preceding scale.

Students participating in AP courses are expected to take the AP test, but the student's score on the exam does not affect their grade for the course. All students are on a level playing field regarding their grade point average (GPA) for college applications because the state has standardized the timing of awarding weighted credit.

The grades of a child in foster care shall not be lowered due to an absence from school due to:

1. A change in the child's school enrollment;
2. The child's attendance at a dependency/neglect court proceeding; or
3. The child's attendance at court-ordered counseling or treatment.

D. Homework Policy (See [Board Policy 5.14P](#))

The term homework refers to an assignment to be completed outside of class or an assignment which requires further individual work in study hall or at home. Fluency and practice is not considered homework per this policy.

The School Board recognized homework is an important part of the educational process and should meet, at a minimum, the following objectives:

- Improvement of learning processes;
- Aid in mastery of skills; and
- The creation and stimulation of interest on the part of the students.

The School Board also recognizes that learning activities in the life of a student are not restricted to the classroom or homework assignments. Participating in school activities, pursuing cultural interests, participating in family living, and exploring personal interests are factors to be considered by teachers in planning assignments.

General Guidelines

1. Homework will be used as a learning activity, increasing in complexity with the maturity of the student. With increased maturity, learning should become a more independent activity. Meaningful assignments will be used to encourage students to investigate for themselves and to work independently as well as with others. As the student advances through school, it is reasonable to expect that the amount of homework may be increased, but care should be exercised in terms of the amount given and the time required for each assignment.
2. Instructions for homework assignments will be clear and specific so that the student may complete the work. All homework will involve some type of follow up and evaluation; the work will be checked for errors and corrected to provide prompt feedback and reinforcement.

Limitations

1. Homework will not require use of materials or equipment not readily available in most homes, school libraries, or public libraries and should require the use of those materials and equipment only after the student has had instruction in their use.
2. Homework will not be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances.

E. Make-Up Work (See [Board Policy 4.8](#))

Students who miss school due to an excused absence shall be allowed to make up the work they missed during their absence under the following rules.

1. Students or parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis are responsible for asking the teachers of the classes they missed what assignments they need to make up on the student's first day back at school or their first class day after their return.
2. Teachers are responsible for providing the missed assignments when asked by a returning student or the student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis.
3. Make-up tests are to be rescheduled at the discretion of the teacher, but must be aligned with the schedule of the missed work to be made up.
4. Students shall have one class day to make up their work for each class day they are absent, at the discretion of the teacher.
5. Make-up work that is not turned in within the make-up schedule for that assignment shall be graded at the discretion of the teacher.
6. Students are responsible for turning in their make-up work without the teacher having to ask for it.
7. Students who are absent on the day their make-up work is due must turn in their work the day they return to school whether or not the class for which the work is due meets the day of their return, unless otherwise advised by the teacher.
8. As required/permitted by the student's IEP or 504 Plan.

Work may not be made up for credit for unexcused absences unless the unexcused absences are part of a signed agreement with the principal.

Students who are found to be out of their designated area for the 2nd time, will not be allowed to make up major classroom tests or assessments during their time out of the designated area. Students will be allowed to make up work missed for the first suspension or any suspension of 2 days or less. The District shall establish programs, measures, or alternative means and methods to continue student engagement and access to education during a student's period of expulsion.

Work for students serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion shall be in accordance with the District's programs, measures, or alternative means and methods to continue student engagement and access to education. This includes offering an expelled student an opportunity for enrollment in other alternative educational courses that result in the receipt of academic credit that is at least equal to credit the expelled student may have received from the District if the student had not been expelled.

F. Progress Reports (See [Board Policy 5.15P1](#))

Interim reports will be sent or made available to parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis of all students during the fifth week of the first term. During the fifth week of the second, third, and fourth terms, teachers will send or publish interim reports to parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis for students who have low or failing grades, and for those whose achievement is deteriorating to the point that there is a possibility of a failing semester, term, or final grade that was not reflected on the previous term's report.

Parent-teacher conferences will occur once each semester based on the District calendar. School records will provide documentation of parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis participation.

Personal communication between the teacher and parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis may be through grade reports, parent-teacher conference, telephone conference, written communications, home visit, notes of commendation, or suggestion for improvement.

G. Student Promotion, Retention and Acceleration (See [Board Policy 4.55P](#))

A disservice is done to students through social promotion and is prohibited by state law. The District shall, at a minimum, evaluate each student annually in an effort to help each student who is not performing at grade level. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis shall be kept informed concerning their student's progress. Notice of a student's possible retention or required retaking of a course shall be included with the student's grades sent home to each parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis or the student if 18 or older. Additional parent-teacher conferences are encouraged and may be held as necessary in an effort to improve a student's academic success.

At least once each semester, the parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and teacher(s) of a student in kindergarten through 8th grade, shall be notified in writing of the student's independent grade-level-equivalency in reading.

Any grades, course credits, and/or promotions received by a student while enrolled in the Division of Youth Services system of education shall be considered transferable in the same manner as those grades, course credits, and promotions from other accredited Arkansas public educational entities.

Students in 9th grade must earn at least 5.5 academic credits to be promoted to 10th grade. Students must earn 11 academic credits to be promoted to 11th grade, and 16.5 academic credits to be promoted to 12th grade. Students on a graduation plan for "on-time" graduation who earn the required credits for promotion to their appropriate grade classification may be reclassified at the next semester's grading period.

At the middle school level, a student is expected to progress annually from grade to grade. A student must pass both semesters of English, math, science, social studies, and grade-level electives to be promoted to the next grade level. Additionally, students, in the judgment of the professional staff, at risk of not reaching sufficient proficiency in basic skills to be potentially successful at the next grade level will be referred to the retention committee.

This committee will look at all available data and determine the grade placement that is in the best educational interest of the student. Data examined will include, but not be limited to: teacher recommendation, medical history, academic achievement, work samples prior educational history, age, and attendance.

The retention committee's decision will be explained by the principal and teacher to parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis of the students. A modification plan, attached to the Student Success Plan (SSP), will be created for each retained student.

At the elementary school level, the school shall, at a minimum, evaluate each student annually in an effort to help students who are not performing at grade level. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis shall be kept informed concerning the progress of their student(s).

Each elementary/middle school shall have a biracial retention committee composed of:

- Counselor assigned to student;
- Principal or assistant principal;
- Classroom teacher(s) who currently work with the student or core team;
- Additional teachers (for example one on the student's grade level and one from the next grade level);
- Instructional Coaches in the school (math, literacy);
- A 504/special education representative (if applicable); and
- The student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis.

If the conference attendees fail to agree concerning the student's placement, the final decision to promote or retain shall rest with the building principal. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis may appeal the promotion/retention by requesting a hearing with the building level principal. The building level decision to promote/retain may be appealed to the Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services or his/her designee.

LEARNs Act: 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency (See [Act 237 \(The LEARNs Act\) Page 51, line 27](#))

In adherence to the LEARNs Act, if a public school student has not met the third-grade reading standard, as defined by the state board, or the student does not have a good-cause exemption, as provided under this subsection, the student shall not be promoted to fourth grade. A good-cause exemption for promotion shall be limited to the following students:

- Limited English Proficiency students who have had less than 3 years of instruction in an English language learner program;
- Students with an IEP or 504 plan (who are not on an alternate assess) that reflects the individual student's abilities;
- Students who were previously retained in Kindergarten, 1st, or 2nd grade;
- Students who have received DESE approved documented literacy interventions for two or more year;
- Certain students who have received a special education referral and a full comprehensive evaluation
- Students who can demonstrate that they are successful and independent readers and can perform at or above grade level;
- Other students with necessary, justifiable good-cause exemptions identified as appropriate by the state board, in consultation with reading experts.

For each student who does not meet the reading standard as established by the state board by the end of third grade, including students who are promoted with good-cause exemptions to the fourth grade, during the subsequent summer and school year, the public school district in which the student is enrolled shall:

- a. Provide evidence-based literacy instruction aligned to the science of reading during each school day;
- b. Assign the student to a teacher with a demonstrated history of achievement, effectiveness, or master teacher designation;
- c. Provide parents or legal guardians with a plan to support student early literacy growth;
- d. Identify eligible students for literacy tutoring grants as established DESE and notify parents or legal guardians regarding their child's eligibility.

Because the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall enforce this section, they will also promulgate rules to implement this section. As these rules and regulations are updated, the Pulaski County Special School District will implement those rules and regulations as directed.

Each student, 8th grade and above, shall have an SSP developed by school personnel in collaboration with the student's parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and the student that is reviewed and updated annually. A student's SSP shall use multiple academic measures to personalize learning in order for students to achieve their grade level expectations and individual growth. Academic measures to be used in creating and updating a student's SSP shall include, but are not limited to:

- Statewide student assessment results;
- Subject grades;
- Student Transition Plans;
- Post-secondary academic or career goals;
- Academy preferences;
- Diplomas of Merit and Distinction requirements;
- Student work samples; and
- Local assessment scores.

By the end of 8th grade, the student's SSP shall:

- Guide the student along pathways to graduation;
- Address accelerated learning opportunities;
- Address academic deficits and interventions; and
- Include college and career planning components.

Based on a student's score on the college and career assessment:

- The student's SSP will be updated in order to assist the student with college and career readiness skills, course selection in high school, and improved academic achievement; and
- Provide a basis for counseling concerning postsecondary preparatory programs.

For students enrolled in PCSSD, an SSP will be created by the end of their 8th grade year. Students who enroll in the District in 9-12th grade will have an SSP put in place as soon as reasonably possible.

A student's IEP may act in the place of the student's SSP if the IEP addresses academic deficits and interventions for the student's failure to meet standards-based academic goals at an expected rate or level and includes a transition plan that addresses college and career planning components. Promotion or retention of students with an IEP shall be based on their successful attainment of the goals set forth in their IEP.

Students who either refuse to sit for a statewide assessment or attempt to boycott a statewide assessment by failing to put forth a good faith effort on the assessment as determined by the assessment administrator/proctor, or whose parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis do not send their child to school on the dates the assessments are originally administered or scheduled as make-up days, shall not be permitted to participate in any extracurricular activity, including school dances, prom, homecoming, senior events, and may be prevented from walking or participating in graduation exercises. The student shall remain ineligible to participate until the student takes the same or a following statewide assessment, as applicable. The Superintendent or designee may waive this paragraph's provisions when the student's failure was due to exceptional or extraordinary circumstances. Students falling under the provisions of this paragraph shall be permitted to attend curriculum related field trips occurring during the school day. The Board believes that acceleration is an effective and research-based intervention for the academic growth of students who are ready for an advanced or faster-paced curriculum. Acceleration can allow a student to advance through the traditional educational setting more rapidly, based on assessed readiness, capability, and motivation.

At the same time, the Board understands that acceleration is not a replacement for gifted education services or programs. Generally, acceleration can occur through one of two broad categories: content-based and grade-based. Grade-based acceleration shortens the number of years a student would otherwise spend in K-12 education, while content-based acceleration occurs within the normal K-12 time span.

Either form of acceleration can be prompted by a parent, teacher, administrator, and by the referral of school staff. In either case, the process of determining the appropriateness of the request shall be under the direction of the district Gifted and Talented Program Director. Acceleration referrals should be submitted in writing to the building principal where the student attends school. The referral should outline what type of acceleration is being requested and include reasons to support the need for acceleration. The District Gifted and Talented Program Director shall convene the Acceleration Placement Committee and communicate with the individuals necessary for the Acceleration Placement Committee to make an informed decision, including the student's parents or guardians.

H. Digital Course Offerings (See [Board Policy 5.11](#))

PCSSD offers blended learning opportunities to students as either a primary method of instruction, or to supplement traditional instruction. These courses may be individually tailored to meet the needs of each student. PCSSD does not offer a complete virtual instruction environment.

All digital learning courses provided to District students have been approved by ADE and meet or exceed the State Board of Education's curriculum standards.

Students must apply to take the digital course(s) at the beginning of Fall semester and the beginning of Spring semester. A student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis must sign the application.

Students withdrawing from a class after the first day of the second 9 weeks of a semester will receive withdrew passing (WP) or withdrew failing (WF) and will not be eligible to enroll in the same course until the next semester.

All coursework and semester exams must be completed by the designated date. All grades will be posted to the student's transcript. Incomplete coursework will be recorded on the high school transcript as "F."

PCSSD may restrict a student's access to digital courses when the student's school principal determines the student's participation in such a course would not be academically appropriate based on the student's past performance in digital courses. The student's school principal may revoke a student's eligibility to continue taking a digital learning course if the student's performance during the semester indicates the student is not

succeeding in the course.

Online learning options are available for high school students interested in graduating early, students who want to take courses not currently offered at PCSSD, and credit recovery. Some online courses, such as those listed in ACT 187 and Act 1280, are available free of charge. Meanwhile, other course offerings are available at an additional cost.

A counselor at the student's home school must initiate a referral to participate in these online learning options. The referral form must be signed by a counselor at the student's home school and delivered to the Central Office. If the student has an IEP or 504 Plan, the appropriate documentation must accompany the referral form.

I. Smart Core Curriculum and Graduation Requirements for the Class of 2026 ([See Board Policy 4.45.1P](#))

All students are required to participate in the Smart Core curriculum unless their parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, or the students if they are 18 years of age or older, sign a *Smart Core Waiver Form* to not participate. While Smart Core is the default option, a *Smart Core Information Sheet* and a *Smart Core Waiver Form* will be sent home with students prior to their enrollment in 7th grade or when a 7th through 12th grade student enrolls in the District for the first time, and there is not a signed waiver form in the student's permanent record. This policy is to be included in student handbooks for 6th through 12th grades, and both students and parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis must sign an acknowledgement they have received the policy. Those students not participating in the Smart Core curriculum will be required to fulfill the Core curriculum or the Alternate Pathway to Graduation when required by their IEP to be eligible for graduation. Counseling by trained personnel shall be available to students and their parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis prior to the deadline for them to sign and return the waiver form. The Student Success Plan (SSP) addresses course selections and meets the needs of Smart Core and the Smart Core Waiver.

While there are similarities between the two curriculums, following the Core curriculum may not qualify students for some scholarships, and admission to certain colleges could be jeopardized. Students initially choosing the Core curriculum may subsequently change to the Smart Core curriculum provided they would be able to complete the required course of study by the end of their senior year. Students wishing to change their choice of curriculums must consult with their counselor to determine the feasibility of changing paths.

This policy, the Smart Core curriculum, and the courses necessary for graduation shall be reviewed by staff, students, and parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis as part of the annual school district support plan development process to determine if changes need to be made to better serve the needs of the District's students. The superintendent, or his/her designee, shall select the composition of the review panel.

Sufficient information relating to Smart Core and the District's graduation requirements shall be communicated to parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and students to ensure their informed understanding of each; this shall be accomplished through holding an informational meeting for parents, legal guardians, or persons standing in loco parentis to students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 with the school counselor and may be accomplished through any or all of the additional following means:

- Inclusion in the student handbook of the Smart Core curriculum and graduation requirements;
- Discussion of the Smart Core curriculum and graduation requirements at the school's annual public meeting, PTA meetings, or a meeting held specifically for the purpose of informing the public on this matter; and/or
- Distribution of a newsletter(s) to parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis of the District's students.

Administrators, or their designees, shall train newly hired employees, required to be licensed as a condition of their employment, regarding this policy. The District's annual professional development shall include the training required by this paragraph.

To the best of its ability, the District shall follow the requirements covering the transfer of course credit and graduation set forth in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and the Arkansas Military Child School Transitions Act of 2021 for all students who meet the definition of "eligible child" in Policy 4.2 Entrance Requirements including the waiving of specific courses that are required for graduation if similar coursework has been satisfactorily completed.

Graduation Requirements

The number of credits students must earn to be eligible for high school graduation is to be earned from the categories listed below. A minimum of 22 credits is required for graduation for a student participating in either the Smart Core or Core curriculum. There are some distinctions made between Smart Core credits and graduation credits. Not all credits earned toward graduation necessarily apply to Smart Core requirements. Career education courses that are determined by DESE to be eligible for use in place of a listed course may be substituted for the course as designated by DESE.

- All students must receive a passing score on the Arkansas Civics Exam in order to graduate.
- Students shall be trained in quality psychomotor skill bases in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of automated external defibrillators in order to graduate.
- All students shall receive credit in a course covering the Personal and Family Finance Standards in order to graduate.
- All students shall earn 1 credit in a computer science or computer science related career and technical education course in order to graduate.

Smart Core: 16 credits Class Of 2026

- English: 4 credits – 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th
- Oral Communications: ½ credit
- Mathematics: 4 credits (all students under Smart Core must take a mathematics course in 11th or 12th grade and complete Algebra II.)
 - Algebra I which may be taken in grades 7, 8, or 9
 - Geometry
 - Algebra II which may be taken as early as the 8th grade; and
 - The 4th credit may be either:
 - A math unit approved by DESE beyond Algebra II; or
 - A computer science flex credit may be taken in the place of a 4th math credit.
- Natural Science: 3 credits
 - DESE approved integrated biology – 1 credit;
 - DESE approved integrated physical science – 1 credit which may be taken as early as the 8th grade; and
 - A 3rd credit that is either:
 - An additional science credit approved by DESE; or
 - A computer science flex credit may be taken in the place of a 3rd science credit.
- Social Studies: 3 credits
 - Civics – ½ credit
 - World History – 1 credit
 - American History – 1 credit
 - Other social studies – ½ credit
- Physical Education: ½ credit

- Note: While ½ credit is required for graduation, no more than 1 credit may be applied toward fulfilling the necessary credits to graduate.
- Health and Safety: ½ credit
- Economics: ½ credit – dependent upon the licensure of the teacher teaching the course, this can count toward the required 3 social studies credits or the 6 required Career Focus elective credits.
- Fine Arts: ½ credit
- Career Focus: 6 credits
 - All career focus unit requirements shall be established through guidance and counseling based on the student's contemplated work aspirations. Career focus courses shall conform to the curriculum policy of the District and reflect state curriculum frameworks through course sequencing and career course concentrations where appropriate.
- A student who enlists in a branch of the United States Armed Forces or the National Guard through the Military Delayed Entry Program, the National Guard Split Training Option, or similar early entry program and completes basic training before graduating from high school shall receive 2 credits of the Career Focus graduation requirements.
- A student who completes at least 75 hours of documented community service in 9th through 12th grades at any certified service agency or part of a service-learning school program shall receive 1 Career Focus credit.

CORE: 16 credits Class of 2026

- English: 4 credits – 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th
- Oral Communications: ½ credit
- Mathematics: 4 credits
 - Algebra I- 1 credit
 - Geometry - 1 credit
 - All math credits must build on the base of algebra and geometry knowledge and skills.
 - Comparable concurrent credit college courses may be substituted where applicable
 - A computer science flex credit may be taken in the place of a fourth math credit as approved by the DESE.
- Science: 3 credits
 - DESE approved integrated biology – 1 credit;
 - DESE approved integrated physical science – 1 credit; and
 - A 3rd credit that is either:
 - An additional science credit approved by DESE; or
 - A computer science flex credit may be taken in the place of a third science credit.
- Social Studies: 3 credits
 - Civics ½ credit
 - World History, 1 credit
 - American History, 1 credit
 - Other social studies – ½ credit
- Physical Education: ½ credit
 - Note: While ½ credit is required for graduation, no more than 1 credit may be applied toward fulfilling the necessary credits to graduate.
- Health and Safety: ½ credit
- Economics: ½ credit – dependent upon the licensure of the teacher teaching the course, this can count toward the required 3 social studies credits or the 6 required Career Focus elective credits.
- Fine Arts: ½ credit
- Career Focus: 6 credits
 - All career focus credit requirements will be established through guidance and counseling based on the student's contemplated work aspirations. Career focus courses will conform to the

curriculum policy of the district and reflect state curriculum frameworks through course sequencing and career course concentrations where appropriate.

- A student who enlists in a branch of the United States Armed Forces or the National Guard through the military delayed entry program, the National Guard Split Training Option, or other similar early entry program and completes basic training before graduating from high school shall receive 2 credits of the Career Focus graduation requirements.
- A student who completes at least 75 hours of documented community service in 9th through 12th grades at any certified service agency or a part of a service-learning school program shall receive 1 Career Focus credit.

Arkansas Alternate Pathway to Graduation

- English Exploration: 4 credits – 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th
 - [English Standards](#)
 - [Dynamic Learning Maps – 9th and 10th grades](#)
 - [Dynamic Learning Maps – 11th and 12th grades](#)
- Oral Communication Exploration: ½ credit
 - [Speaking and Listening Standards](#)
- Mathematics Exploration: 4 credits
 - [Mathematics Standards](#)
 - [Dynamic Learning Maps](#)
 - [Achievement Standards for Mathematics](#)
- Science Exploration: 3 credits
 - [Science Standards](#)
 - [Dynamic Learning Maps](#)
- Social Studies: 3 credits
 - [U.S. History Exploration Standards](#)
 - [World History Exploration Standards](#)
 - [Civics Exploration Standards](#)
 - [Economics Exploration and Personal Finance Exploration \(required ½ credit\) Standards](#)
- Health and Safety Exploration: 1 credit
 - [Health and Safety Exploration Standards](#)
- Fine Arts: ½ credit
 - [Visual Art Exploration Standards](#)
 - Or DESE approved Fine Arts credit
- Career Focus: 1 transition-focused course or community service each year
- 6 additional credits
- Credit in an approved course that has financial literacy standards
- Arkansas Civics Exam (if determined by the student's IEP team)

J. Smart Core Curriculum and Graduation Requirements for the Class of 2027 and Thereafter ([Board Policy 4.45.2P](#))

All students are required to participate in the Smart Core curriculum unless their parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, or the students if they are 18 years of age or older, sign a *Smart Core Waiver Form* to not participate. While Smart Core is the default option, a *Smart Core Information Sheet* and a *Smart Core Waiver Form* will be sent home with students prior to their enrolling in 7th grade or when a 7th through 12th grade student enrolls in the District for the first time, and there is not a signed waiver form in the student's permanent record. This policy is to be included in student handbooks for 6th through 12th grades, and both students and parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis must sign an acknowledgement they have received the policy. Those students not participating in the Smart Core curriculum will be required to fulfill the Core curriculum or the Alternate Pathway to Graduation when required by their IEP to be eligible for graduation. Counseling by trained personnel shall be available

to students and their parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis prior to the deadline for them to sign and return the waiver form. The Student Success Plan (SSP) addresses course selections and meets the needs of Smart Core and the Smart Core Waiver.

While there are similarities between the two curriculums, following the Core curriculum may not qualify students for some scholarships, and admission to certain colleges could be jeopardized. Students initially choosing the Core curriculum may subsequently change to the Smart Core curriculum provided they would be able to complete the required course of study by the end of their senior year. Students wishing to change their choice of curriculums must consult with their counselor to determine the feasibility of changing paths.

This policy, the Smart Core curriculum, and the courses necessary for graduation shall be reviewed by staff, students, and parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis as part of the annual school district support plan development process to determine if changes need to be made to better serve the needs of the district's students. The Superintendent, or his/her designee, shall select the composition of the review panel.

Sufficient information relating to Smart Core and the District's graduation requirements shall be communicated to parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and students to ensure their informed understanding of each; this shall be accomplished through holding an informational meeting for parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis to students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 with the school counselor and may be accomplished through any or all of the additional following means:

- Inclusion in the student handbook of the Smart Core curriculum and graduation requirements;
- Discussion of the Smart Core curriculum and graduation requirements at the school's annual public meeting, PTA meetings, or a meeting held specifically for the purpose of informing the public on this matter; and/or
- Distribution of a newsletter(s) to parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis of the district's students.

Administrators, or their designees, shall train newly hired employees, required to be licensed as a condition of their employment, regarding this policy. The District's annual professional development shall include the training required by this paragraph.

To the best of its ability, the District shall follow the requirements covering the transfer of course credit and graduation set forth in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and the Arkansas Military Child School Transitions Act of 2021 for all students who meet the definition of "eligible child" in Policy 4.2—Entrance Requirement including the waiving of specific courses that are required for graduation if similar coursework has been satisfactorily completed.

Graduation Requirements

The number of credits students must earn to be eligible for high school graduation is to be earned from the categories listed below. A minimum of 22 credits is required for graduation for a student participating in either the Smart Core or Core curriculum. There are some distinctions made between Smart Core units and Graduation credits. Not all credits earned toward graduation necessarily apply to Smart Core requirements. Career education courses that are determined by DESE to be eligible for use in place of a listed course may be substituted for the course as designated by DESE.

- All students must receive a passing score on the Arkansas Civics Exam in order to graduate.
- Students shall be trained in quality psychomotor skill bases in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of automated external defibrillators in order to graduate.
- All students shall receive credit in a course covering the Personal and Family Finance Standards in order to graduate.

- All students shall earn 1 credit in a computer science or computer science-related career and technical education course in order to graduate.
- Each student must receive 75 clock hours of community service certified by the service agency or organization where the student volunteers.
 - The community service must be in programs or activities, either in Arkansas or outside Arkansas, that meet the requirements established by the State Board and the District Board of Directors and include preparation, action, and reflection components. Except as provided by this policy, a student must receive at least the following documented clock hours of community service each year:
 - 15 hours for students in grade 9;
 - 20 hours for students in grade 10;
 - 20 hours for students in grades 11; and
 - 20 hours for students in grade 12.
 - Students transferring into the District after grade nine or students who are graduating early may receive a diploma provided that the minimum requirement for each year the student attends the District is met. The District Board of Directors may grant a waiver of the community service requirement for extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis, which may include, without limitation:
 - A major illness associated with a student or a family member of a student;
 - Student homelessness or housing insecurity; and
 - Notice to the public school district board of directors if the student is a major contributor to family income.

Smart Core: 16 credits Class of 2027 and Thereafter

- English: 4 credits – 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th
- Oral Communications: ½ credit
- Mathematics: 4 credits (all students under Smart Core must take a mathematics course in 11th or 12th grade and complete Algebra II.)
 - Algebra I which may be taken in grades 7, 8, or 9;
 - Geometry
 - * A 2 year algebra equivalent or a 2 year geometry equivalent may each be counted as 2 credits of the 4 credit requirement for the purpose of meeting the graduation requirement, but only serve as 1 credit each toward fulfilling the Smart Core requirement.
 - Algebra II which may be taken as early as the 8th grade; and
 - The 4th credit may be either:
 - A math unit approved by DESE beyond Algebra II; or
 - A computer science flex credit may be taken in the place of a 4th math credit.
- Natural Science: 3 credits
 - DESE approved integrated biology – 1 credit;
 - DESE approved integrated physical science – 1 credit which may be taken as early as the 8th grade; and
 - A 3rd credit that is either:
 - An additional science credit approved by DESE; or
 - A computer science flex credit may be taken in the place of a 3rd science credit.
- Social Studies: 3 credits
 - Civics – ½ credit
 - World History – 1 credit
 - American History – 1 credit
 - Other social studies – ½ credit
- Physical Education: ½ credit

- Note: While ½ credit is required for graduation, no more than 1 credit may be applied toward fulfilling the necessary credits to graduate.
- Health and Safety: ½ credit
- Economics: ½ credit – dependent upon the licensure of the teacher teaching the course, this can count toward the required 3 social studies credits or the 6 required Career Focus elective credits.
- Fine Arts: ½ credit
- Career Focus: 6 credits
 - All career focus credit requirements shall be established through guidance and counseling based on the student's contemplated work aspirations. Career focus courses shall conform to the curriculum policy of the District and reflect state curriculum frameworks through course sequencing and career course concentrations where appropriate.
- A student who enlists in a branch of the United States Armed Forces or the National Guard through the Military Delayed Entry Program, the National Guard Split Training Option, or similar early entry program and completes basic training before graduating from high school shall receive 2 credits of the Career Focus graduation requirements.
- A student who completes at least 75 hours of documented community service in 9th through 12th grades at any certified service agency or part of a service-learning school program shall receive 1 Career Focus credit.

CORE: 16 credits Class of 2027 and Thereafter

- English: 4 credits – 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th
- Oral Communications: ½ credit
- Mathematics: 4 credits
 - Algebra I – 1 credit
 - Geometry – 1 credit
 - All math credits must build on the base of algebra and geometry knowledge and skills.
 - Comparable concurrent credit college courses may be substituted where applicable
 - A computer science flex credit may be taken in the place of a fourth math credit as approved by the DESE.
- Science: 3 credits
 - DESE approved integrated biology – 1 credit;
 - DESE approved integrated physical science – 1 credit; and
 - A 3rd credit that is either:
 - An additional science credit approved by DESE; or
 - A computer science flex credit may be taken in the place of a third science credit.
- Social Studies: 3 credits
 - Civics ½ credit
 - World History, 1 credit
 - American History, 1 credit
 - Other social studies – ½ credit
- Physical Education: ½ credit
 - Note: While ½ credit is required for graduation, no more than 1 credit may be applied toward fulfilling the necessary credits to graduate.
- Health and Safety: ½ credit
- Economics: ½ credit – dependent upon the licensure of the teacher teaching the course, this can count toward the required 3 social studies credits or the 6 required Career Focus elective credits.
- Fine Arts: ½ credit
- Career Focus: 6 credits
 - All career focus credit requirements will be established through guidance and counseling based on the student's contemplated work aspirations. Career focus courses will conform to the

curriculum policy of the district and reflect state curriculum frameworks through course sequencing and career course concentrations where appropriate.

- A student who enlists in a branch of the United States Armed Forces or the National Guard through the Military Delayed Entry Program, the National Guard Split Training Option, or other similar early entry program and completes basic training before graduating from high school shall receive 2 credits of the Career Focus graduation requirements.
- A student who completes at least 75 hours of documented community service in 9th through 12th grades at any certified service agency or a part of a service-learning school program shall receive 1 Career Focus credit.

K. Graduation Exercises (See [Board Policy 5.17P2](#))

Appropriate graduation programs will be planned by senior high schools and conducted within the time frame established through the current school year calendar. All students having met regulations established by the Superintendent may participate in the graduation ceremonies.

Determination of Eligibility

1. Students must complete all graduation requirements that are in effect at the time of graduation at least 1 week prior to graduation to be eligible to participate (walk) and receive their diploma at graduation ceremonies. Students who fail to meet all graduation requirements by graduation must complete all requirements by December of the intended graduation year. If the student does not meet the graduation deadline, the student must meet the graduation requirements in effect at the time of completion.
2. Students who plan to graduate early (less than 8 semesters), must have an early graduation plan on file with the counseling department. Graduation plans must be completed no later than September 1 of the year of intended early graduation. Early graduates must meet the same provisions as stated in number 1. If the above requirements are not met, the District will not be held responsible for refunds of items purchased.
3. Students who have met graduation requirements, but failed to submit an early graduation plan may not be allowed to participate (walk) in graduation ceremonies.

L. Honor Roll and Honor Graduates (See [Board Policy 5.17P1](#))

Students in grades K-12 who maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA for the grading period will be recognized as honor roll students for that grading period. Semester grades will determine the honor roll at the end of each semester.

Students in 9-12th grades who have successfully completed the minimum courses recommended for preparation for college, as defined by the State Board of Higher Education and the State Board of Education, and have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 on a weighted scale, will be designated as honor students. The GPA shall be derived from courses taken in public schools or ADE accredited schools or programs in 9th through 12th grades, except in cases where students are enrolled in high school courses during middle school. Any credited high school course taken during middle school shall be considered part of the student's high school transcript and cumulative GPA.

Class rank for the designation of student honors (valedictorian, etc) will be determined at the end of the 8th semester for graduating seniors. Students will be ranked at the end of the 1st semester of the graduating year for college admission and scholarship purposes. Class rank is to be determined by assigning the highest average a rank of number 1, the 2nd highest, the rank of number 2, etc. In cases where more than 1 student has the same numeral average, all students with that average will be given the same rank. The next highest average will assume the next rank position which will indicate the number of students having a higher rank. The numerical rank will be extended to 3 digits.

Valedictorian: The student with the highest class rank will be valedictorian. In instances when more than 1 student holds the numerical 1 rank, all students holding the rank will be declared co-valedictorians.

Salutatorian: The student with the 2nd highest class rank will be declared salutatorian. In instances when more than 1 student holds the numerical 2 rank, all students holding the rank will be declared co-salutatorians.

Honor Graduate: In order to qualify as an honor graduate:

- A student must have a minimum 3.5 GPA and be enrolled in core courses required for graduation by the final semester of the year in which he/she will graduate.
 - A student enrolled in a course which cannot be completed by the end of the 4th 9 weeks is not eligible to be an honor graduate.
- A private or homeschooled student must have enrolled or re-enrolled in the District and attended classes for at least the 9 months immediately prior to graduation; or
- A private or homeschooled student must have completed the 2 consecutive grades immediately prior to the graduation year in an accredited secondary school (9-12th grades) to be considered for ranking as an honor graduate, including valedictorian and salutatorian. Rank in class and GPA will be determined only by credits earned while attending an accredited high school.

In computing class rank of students, the following system will be used:

- Regular classes: Each grade will be given the indicated value, A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, F = 0.
- AP classes: Each AP course will be given the indicated value, A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, F = 0.

M. Notice of Students' Records/Directory Information (See [Board Policy 4.13](#)) FERPA Rule (34CFR99.7)

Except when a court order regarding a student has been presented to the District to the contrary, all students' education records are available for inspection and copying by the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis of his/her student who is under the age of 18. At the age of 18, the right to inspect and copy a student's records transfers to the student. A student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis or the student if over the age of 18 requesting to review the student's education records, will be allowed to do so within no more than 45 days of the request. The District forwards education records, including disciplinary records, to schools that have requested them and in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.

The District shall receive written permission before releasing education records to any agency or individual not authorized by law to receive and/or view the education records without prior parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis permission. The District shall maintain a record of requests by such agencies or individuals for access to, and each disclosure of, personally identifiable information (PII) from the education records of each student. Disclosure of education records is authorized by law to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A personal record kept by a school staff member is not considered an education record if it meets the following tests:

- it is in the sole possession of the individual who made it;
- it is used only as a personal memory aid; and
- information contained in it has never been revealed or made available to any other person, except the maker's temporary substitute.

For the purposes of this policy, a school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks.

For the purposes of this policy a school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility, contracted duty, or duty of

elected office.

In addition to releasing PII to school officials without permission, the District may disclose PII from the education records of students in foster care placement to the student's caseworker or to the caseworker's representative without getting prior consent of the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis (or the student if the student is over 18). For the District to release the student's PII without getting permission:

- The student must be in foster care;
- The individual to whom the PII will be released must have legal access to the student's case plan; and
- The DHS, or a sub-agency of the Department, must be legally responsible for the care and protection of the student.

The District discloses PII from an education record to appropriate parties, including parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

When deciding whether to release PII in a health or safety emergency, the District may take into account the totality of the circumstances pertaining to a threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals. If the District determines that there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, it may disclose information from education records to any person whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

For purposes of this policy, PCSSD does not distinguish between a custodial and non-custodial parent, or a non-parent such as a person acting in loco parentis or a foster parent with respect to gaining access to a student's records. Unless a court order restricting such access has been presented to the District to the contrary, the fact of a person's status as parent or guardian, alone, enables that parent or guardian to review and copy his/her child's records.

If there exists a court order which states that a parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis not have access to a student or his/her records, the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis, or an agent of DHS must present a file-marked copy of such order to the building principal and the Superintendent. The school will make good faith efforts to act in accordance with such court order, but the failure to do so does not impose legal liability upon the school. The actual responsibility for enforcement of such court orders rests with the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis, their attorneys and the court which issued the order.

A parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis does not have the right to remove any material from a student's records, but such parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis may challenge the accuracy of a record. The right to challenge the accuracy of a record does not include the right to dispute a grade, disciplinary rulings, disability placements, or other such determinations, which must be done only through the appropriate teacher and/or administrator, the decision of whom is final. A challenge to the accuracy of material contained in a student's file must be initiated with the building principal, with an appeal available to the Superintendent or his/her designee. The challenge shall clearly identify the part of the student's record the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis wants changed and specify why he/she believes it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school determines not to amend the record as requested, the school will notify the requesting parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis or student of the decision and inform them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amending the record. The parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis or eligible student will be provided information regarding the hearing procedure when notified of the right to a hearing.

Unless the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis of a student (or student, if above the age of 18) objects, "directory information" about a student may be made available to the public, military recruiters, post

secondary educational institutions, prospective employers of those students, as well as school publications such as annual yearbooks and graduation announcements. "Directory information" includes, but is not limited to, a student's name, student ID number, address, telephone number, email address, photograph, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, his/her placement on the honor roll (or the receipt of other types of honors), as well as his/her participation in school clubs and extracurricular activities, among others.

If the student participates in inherently public activities (for example, basketball, football, or other interscholastic activities), the publication of such information will be beyond the control of the District.

A student's name and photograph will only be displayed on the District or school's web page(s) after receiving the written permission from the student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis or student if over the age of 18.

The photo release form and the form for objecting to making directory information available will be sent to families at the beginning of the school year and must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis or age eligible student and filed with the building principal's office no later than 10 school days after the beginning of each school year or the date the student is enrolled for school. Failure to file an objection within the stated time frame is considered a specific grant of permission. The District will honor any signed opt out form for a student no longer enrolled with the District.

The right to opt out of the disclosure of directory information under FERPA does not prevent the District from disclosing or requiring a student to disclose the student's name, identifier, or institutional email address in a class in which the student is enrolled.

Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and students over the age of 18 who believe the District has failed to comply with the requirements for the lawful release of student records may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education at:

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

N. Alternative Learning Environments (See [Board Policy 5.26](#))

PCSSD has Alternative Learning Environments (ALE) programs at the elementary and secondary levels which are designed to provide prevention and intervention strategies to students who are at risk due to poor attendance, failing grades, inappropriate behavior, excessive suspensions, or an overall lack of interest in the traditional educational setting. Alternative learning referrals must be initiated at the student's school of attendance by a parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis, school official, or school special education designee to be submitted to the alternative education placement team. Placement of a student in an ALE classroom shall not be punitive in nature.

The principal or designee shall appoint an Alternative Education Placement Team which shall have the responsibility of determining student placement in the ALE, if an alternative placement is the most appropriate setting for the student's specific needs. A student may be enrolled in an ALE upon the referral of the Alternative Education Placement Team. The team's placement decision is final and may not be appealed.

The team is to be comprised of the following:

- A school counselor from the referring school;
- The ALE administrator and/or ALE teacher;
- The building principal or assistant principal from the referring school;

- A parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis (if they choose to participate);
 - The District shall document its efforts to contact the student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis to schedule a meeting or a phone call for a placement meeting at the convenience of the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis, and maintain such documentation in the student's Student Action Plan (SAP).
- Local Education Agency special education/504 representative (if applicable);
- At least 1 of the student's regular classroom teachers; and
- If the District so chooses, the student.

Students who are placed in the ALE shall exhibit at least 2 of the characteristics from the items listed below:

- Disruptive behavior;
- Dropping out from school;
- Recurring absenteeism;
- Personal or family problems or situations that negatively affect the student's academic and social progress. These may include, but are not limited to:
 - Ongoing, persistent failure to attain proficiency levels in literacy and mathematics;
 - Abuse: physical, mental, or sexual;
 - Frequent relocation of residency;
 - Homelessness;
 - Inadequate emotional support;
 - Mental/physical health problems;
 - Pregnancy; or
 - Single parenting

No later than 5 school days after a student begins alternative education interventions, the Alternative Education Placement Team shall develop a signed agreement between the ALE class, the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis (if they choose to participate), and the student, outlining the responsibilities to provide assurance that the plan is successful.

No later than 5 school days after a student begins alternative education interventions, the Alternative Education Placement Team shall assess the student's current functioning abilities and all relevant social, emotional, academic, career, and behavioral information and develop an SAP outlining the intervention services to be provided to the student that is in compliance with DESE rules. The SAP may be revised from time to time by the ALE Placement Team and a positive behavior or transitional plan shall be developed and added to the SAP prior to a student's return to the regular educational environment.

The District's ALE program shall follow class size, staffing, curriculum, and expenditure requirements identified in the ADE rules. It may be convenient for schools to operate or integrate this committee through established Response to Intervention committees located within the school. The District Hearing Officer can assign students to the ALE in lieu of expulsion through the hearing process. Students entering PCSSD from another school district who have previously been assigned to ALE will receive a comparable assignment.

0. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

AVID's mission is to close the opportunity gap by preparing all students for college and career readiness and success in a global society. It is a component of the AVID College Career Readiness System and provides a comprehensive model of success for all students, from elementary through higher education. The center of AVID's learning process is three-fold:

1. Rigor, relevance, and relationships in each classroom.
2. Introducing college and career thinking.
3. Close the opportunity gap before it begins.

PCSSD is gradually implementing AVID by adding a grade level each school year. It is the District's goal to have AVID designated schools in grades K-12.

P. Academic Dishonesty

A student will not cheat on assignments or tests, nor will a student aid other students in cheating. Students caught cheating will receive a zero (0). Using artificial intelligence tools in some cases and without formal citation is academically dishonest and may be considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered academic dishonesty. Any student committing plagiarism will receive a zero (0).

Q. Responsibility for District Issued/Owned Instructional Materials

Students are responsible for instructional materials issued to them such as Chromebooks, iPads, lab materials, text/library books, athletic equipment, and other school issued and owned materials. The cost of repair or replacement of school property will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis.

R. Artificial Intelligence Tools Policy 4.64

Definition: "Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools" means Software applications or platforms that utilize machine learning algorithms to perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence, such as generating content, providing recommendations, or solving problems. For purposes of this policy, AI tools do not include the use of spell check or grammar check.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the responsible use of AI tools by District students. The policy applies to all students enrolled in the District and covers the use of AI tools when completing District assignments or projects.

The district shall provide teachers and students with resources and education on AI literacy and digital citizenship. The District shall establish a committee that shall be responsible for the review and selection of AI tools that shall be available for students to use. All AI tools selected by the committee shall comply with applicable state and federal data privacy laws. Students shall only use AI tools that were approved by the District committee for classroom assignments or projects.

Teachers are responsible for providing instructions on when and how AI tools may be used for classroom assignments. Students may use AI tools as approved by their classroom teacher to enhance learning and develop future-ready skills.

Students should use AI tools ethically and responsibly, aligning with the District's educational objectives and in a manner that does not harm themselves or others. As part of using AI tools responsibly, students should be cautious about the information they provide to AI tools and consult with a teacher if unsure. At no time shall students share personal, sensitive, or confidential information with AI tools, especially AI tools requiring data input.

When a student uses AI tools, a student shall:

1. Review and verify the accuracy of content that is generated by an AI tool;
2. Cite AI tools used as part of an assignment or project as a source, following District citation guidelines; and
3. Be transparent about their use of AI in completing assignments.

Students must ensure all submitted work is their own and properly acknowledge or cite any assistance from AI tools. Students are encouraged to ask questions if they are unsure about the acceptable use of AI tools.

The following actions regarding AI tools are strictly prohibited:

- Misuse of AI tools for cheating, plagiarism, or any form of academic dishonesty, including the submission of assignments that were fully generated by an AI tool and presented as original student work;
- Altering or falsifying academic documents or records using AI tools;
- Using AI tools to:
 - Gain unauthorized access to District systems; or
 - Bypass District security measures.
- Using AI tools to produce misleading or false information, imagery, or any form of false outputs about themselves, other students, or staff members.

Students should report any inappropriate content or security concerns encountered while using AI tools to a teacher or administrator.

Violations of this policy shall be handled in accordance with the District's disciplinary procedures.

S. IT Educational Services

To enhance our academic programs, we use various online tools and resources designed for educational purposes. These tools facilitate learning, communication, and collaboration in the classroom while ensuring privacy and security. Students will receive digital literacy instruction at the beginning of each school year to ensure the safe, responsible, and ethical use of the district network. This instruction will equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate digital environments securely and responsibly.

Consent Statement:

I give permission for my child to use educational technology platforms and online services the school provides as part of his/her learning experience. These tools may include, but are not limited to, learning management systems, communication platforms, and educational content providers. Examples include [Google Workspace for Education](#), Microsoft Education, Lexia, and IXL.

I understand that these tools may collect personal information, such as my child's name, student ID, and other educational records, in compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and [ACT 754](#).

I acknowledge that I have been provided access to the PCSSD Acceptable Use Policy, which is located on the [district website here](#), and understand that the school uses internet filtering to comply with the Children Internet Protection Act (CIPA) to ensure a safe online environment for students. I agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the Acceptable Use Policy.

Section III. Attendance



A. Compulsory Attendance (See [Board Policy 4.3](#))

Every parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the child, or person standing in loco parentis of any child age 5 through 17 years on or before August 1 of that year who resides, as defined by policy, within the District shall enroll the child and ensure the attendance of the child at a District school with the following exceptions.

1. The child is enrolled in private or parochial school.
2. The child is being home-schooled and the conditions of policy have been met.
3. The child will not be age 6 on or before August 1 of that particular school year and the parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the child, or person standing in loco parentis of the child elects not to have him/her attend kindergarten. A kindergarten waiver form prescribed by regulation of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education must be signed and on file with the District administrative office.
4. The child has received a high school diploma or its equivalent as determined by the State Board of Education.
5. The child is age 16 or above and is enrolled in a post-secondary vocational-technical institution, a community college, or a two-year or four-year institution of higher education.
6. The child is age 16 or 17 and has met the requirements to enroll in an adult education program as defined by A.C.A. § 6-18-201(b).

B. Entrance Age Requirements (See [Board Policy 4.2](#))

To enroll in a school in the District, the child must be a resident of the District as defined in District policy (4.1—Residence Requirements), meet the criteria outlined in policy 4.40—Homeless Students or in policy 4.52—Students Who Are Foster Children, be accepted as a transfer student under the provisions of policy 4.4, or participate under a school choice option and submit the required paperwork as required by the choice option under Policy 4.5.

Students may enter kindergarten if they will attain the age of 5 on or before August 1 of the year in which they are seeking initial enrollment. Any student who has been enrolled in a state-accredited or state-approved kindergarten program in another state for at least 60 days, who will become 5 years old during the year in which he/she is enrolled in kindergarten, and who meet the basic residency requirement for school attendance may be enrolled in kindergarten upon written request to the District. Any student who was enrolled in a state-accredited or state-approved kindergarten program in another state or in a kindergarten program equivalent in another country becomes a resident of this state as a direct result of active military orders or a court-ordered change of custody, will become 5 years of age during the year in which he or she is enrolled in kindergarten, and meets the basic residency requirement for school attendance may be enrolled in kindergarten upon a written request to the District.

Any child who will be 6 years of age on or before October 1 of the school year of enrollment and who has not completed a state-accredited kindergarten program shall be evaluated by the district and may be placed in the 1st grade if the results of the evaluation justify placement in the 1st grade, and the child's parent or legal guardian agrees with placement in the 1st grade; otherwise, the child shall be placed in kindergarten.

Any child may enter 1st grade in a District school if the child will attain the age of 6 years during the school year in which the child is seeking enrollment and the child has successfully completed a kindergarten program in a public school in Arkansas.

Any child who has been enrolled in the 1st grade in a state-accredited or state-approved elementary school in another state for a period of at least 60 days, who will become age 6 years during the school year in which he/she is enrolled in grade 1, and who meets the basic residency requirements for school attendance may be enrolled in the 1st grade.

Students who move into the District from an accredited school shall be assigned to the same grade as they were attending in their previous school (mid-year transfers) or as they would have been assigned in their previous school.

Private school students shall be evaluated by the District to determine their appropriate grade placement. Home school students enrolling or re-enrolling as public school students shall be placed in accordance with policy 4.6—Home Schooling.

The District shall make no attempt to ascertain the immigration status, legal or illegal, of any student or his/her parent or legal guardian presenting for enrollment.

Prior to the child's admission to a District school:

1. The parent, legal guardian, a person having lawful control of the student, or standing in loco parentis shall furnish the child's social security number, or if they request, the district will assign the child a nine (9) digit number designated by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.
2. The parent, guardian, or other responsible person shall provide the district with one (1) of the following documents indicating the child's age:
 - a. Birth certificate;
 - b. A statement by the local registrar or a county recorder certifying the child's date of birth;
 - c. An attested baptismal certificate;
 - d. A passport;
 - e. An affidavit of the date and place of birth by the child's parent, or legal guardian, a person having lawful control of the student, or a person standing in loco parentis;
 - f. United States military identification; or
 - g. Previous school records.
- The parent, legal guardian, a person having lawful control of the student, or person standing in loco parentis shall indicate on school registration forms whether the child has been expelled from school in any other school district or is a party to an expulsion proceeding. Any person who has been expelled from any other school district shall receive a hearing before the Board at the time the student is seeking enrollment in the District. The Board reserves the right to not allow the enrollment of such students until the time of the person's expulsion has expired following the hearing before the Board.
- The child shall be age-appropriately immunized or have an exemption issued by the Arkansas Department of Health.

C. Uniformed Services Member's Children

For the purposes of this policy:

"Activated reserve components" means members of the reserve component of the uniformed services who have received a notice of intent to deploy or mobilize under Title 10 of the United States Code, Title 32 of the United States Code, or state mobilization to active duty.

"Active duty" means full-time duty status in the active, uniformed services of the United States, including, without limitation, members of The National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders under 10 U.S.C. chapters 1209 and 1211 or 42 U.S.C. § 204.

"Deployment" means a period of time extending from six (6) months before a member of the uniformed services' departure from their home station on military orders through six (6) months after return to his or her home station.

"Dual status military technician" means a federal civilian employee who is:

- a. Employed under 5 U.S.C. § 3101 or 32 U.S.C. § 709(b);
- b. Required as a condition of his or her employment to maintain membership in the Selected Reserve; and
- c. Assigned to a civilian position as a technician in the organizing, administering, instructing or training

of the Selected Reserve or in the maintenance and repair of supplies or equipment issued to the Selected Reserve of the United States Armed Forces.

"Eligible child " means the children of:

- a. Active duty members of the uniformed services;
- b. Members of the active and activated reserve components of the uniformed services;
- c. Members or veterans of the uniformed services who are severely injured and medically discharged or retired for a period of one (1) year after medical discharge or retirement; and
- d. Members of the uniformed services who die on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty for a period of one (1) year after death;;
- e. Dual-status military technicians; and
- f. Traditional members of the National Guard and reserve components of the armed forces who are relocating to the state for employment or to serve as a member of an Arkansas-based reserve component unit.

"Traditional member of the National Guard or federal reserves" means an active member of the Selected Reserve subject to mobilization and deployment for which he or she attends monthly and annual training periods.

"Transition" means the following:

- Formal and physical process of transitioning from public school to public school; or
- Period of time in which a student moves from a sending district to a receiving district.

"Uniformed services" means the United States Army, United States Navy, United States Air Force, United States Marine Corps, United States Space Force, United States Coast Guard, the National Oceanic, and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps, the United States Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Services, and the state and federal reserve components of each of these bodies.

"Veteran" means an individual who served in the uniformed services and who was discharged or released from the uniformed services under conditions other than dishonorable.

The Superintendent shall designate an individual as the District's military education coordinator, who shall serve as the primary point of contact for an eligible child and for the eligible child's parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the eligible child, or person standing in loco parentis. The individual, the Superintendent designated as the District's military education coordinator, shall have specialized knowledge regarding the educational needs of children of military families and the obstacles that children of military families face in obtaining an education.

An eligible child, as defined in this policy, shall:

1. Be allowed to continue his/her enrollment at the grade level commensurate with his/her grade level he/she was in at the time of transition from his/her previous school, regardless of age;
2. Be eligible for enrollment in the next highest grade level, regardless of age, if the student has satisfactorily completed the prerequisite grade level in his/her previous school;
3. Enter the District's school on the validated level from his/her previous accredited school when transferring into the District after the start of the school year;
4. Be enrolled in courses and programs the same as or similar to the ones the student was enrolled in his/her previous school to the extent that space is available. This does not prohibit the District from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement and continued enrollment of the student in the courses/and/or programs;
5. Be provided services comparable to those the student with disabilities received in his/her previous school based on his/her previous Individualized Education Program (IEP). This does not preclude the District school from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure the appropriate placement of the student;

6. Make reasonable accommodations and modifications to address the needs of an incoming student with disabilities, subject to an existing 504 or Title II Plan, necessary to provide the student with equal access to education. This does not preclude the District school from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure the appropriate placement of the student;
7. Be enrolled by an individual who has been given the special power of attorney for the student's guardianship. The individual shall have the power to take all other actions requiring parental participation and/or consent;
8. Be eligible to continue attending District schools if he/she has been placed under the legal guardianship of a noncustodial parent living outside the District by a custodial parent on active military duty.

Following the receipt of advanced notice of the enrollment of an eligible student from a military family, the District shall treat the notice as a provisional enrollment and provide the student with materials regarding:

- a. Academic courses;
- b. Electives;
- c. Sports; and
- d. Other relevant information regarding the public school.

In the event that official copies of an eligible child's education records are not available at the time the eligible child is transferring, then the District shall:

- Pre-register and place an eligible child based on the eligible child's unofficial education records pending receipt of the eligible child's official records; and
- Request the eligible child's official education records from the sending district.

To facilitate a smooth transition between the student's previous coursework and the curriculum best suited to ensure educational success in the student's new school, the District may enroll an inbound transitioning eligible student in digital coursework, if available, at the request of the military family.

International Exchange Students

"Host family" means the individual or family with whom an international exchange student is placed by an international student exchange visitor placement organization under the International Student Exchange Visitor Placement Organization Registration Act, § 6-18-1701 et seq.

"International exchange student" means a student who is placed with a host family by an international student exchange visitor placement organization under the International Student Exchange Visitor Placement Organization Registration Act, § 6-18-1701 et seq.

Before an international exchange student may attend a District school, the District requires all international student exchange visitor placement organizations that are placing international exchange students within the District to:

- Be certified by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel;
- Provide documented proof of the international exchange student's English proficiency; and
- Notify the District at least 3 weeks before the beginning of the academic semester that the international exchange student plans to enroll in the District.

The District shall admit for enrollment and attendance an international exchange student who has been placed with a host family who resides within the District boundaries. The international exchange student shall attend the school in the District based on the attendance zone where the host family resides.

Upon an international exchange student's arrival, the international exchange student may be required to submit to quarantine to prevent the spread of infectious diseases as may be necessary, which shall not exceed 7 days unless otherwise recommended by the Arkansas Department of Health or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. International exchange students are expected to follow the District handbook and student code of conduct as the

District has the authority to expel a student for violations of the school district's written student discipline policies or if the international exchange student presents a danger to the District's students or employees.

Statewide assessment results achieved by an international exchange student enrolled in the District shall be included in the District's results on the statewide assessments.

The District shall provide English-language services to international exchange students as necessary.

D. Classroom Assignment of Multiple Birth Siblings

"Multiple birth sibling" means a twin, triplet, quadruplet, or other sibling resulting from a multiple birth; and "parent" means the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis of a student enrolled in a public school.

Not later than the 14th day before the 1st day of school, a parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis of multiple birth siblings who are assigned to the same grade level and school, in prekindergarten through 6th grade, may request in writing that the school place the siblings in the same classroom or in separate classrooms.

The school may direct a classroom placement for the multiple birth siblings that differs from the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis request if 30 instructional days have lapsed since the date the multiple birth siblings began the classroom placement made at the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis request; and after consulting with the teacher of each classroom in which the multiple birth siblings are placed, the school determines that the classroom placement requested by the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis is:

- Detrimental to the educational achievement of 1 or more of the multiple birth siblings;
- Disruptive to the classroom learning environment where the multiple birth sibling is assigned; or
- Disruptive to the school's educational or disciplinary environment.

E. School Admissions

All persons seeking admission to the District must meet eligibility requirements for the school or program to which they seek admission.

Any student transferring from a school accredited by ADE to a school in this District shall be placed into the same grade the student would have been in had the student remained at the former school. Any grades, course credits, and/or promotions received by a student while enrolled in the Division of Youth Services system of education shall be considered transferable in the same manner as those grades, course credits, and promotions from other accredited Arkansas public educational entities.

The District shall reject applications that would cause it to be out of compliance with applicable laws and regulations regarding desegregation. Students who request admission at a time when they are suspended from another school district will not be admitted until the period of suspension expires. This policy will also apply if a student has been recommended for expulsion, but has been allowed to withdraw from school prior to final action on the recommendation. The PCSSD Board of Education reserves the right, after a hearing before the Board, not to allow any person who has been expelled from another district to enroll as a student until the time of the person's expulsion has expired.

Transcripts of students transferring into the District will be assessed and evaluated by the principal or his/her designee at the receiving school. Course credits will be accepted as determined by the principal. Grades will be accepted on the same grading scale utilized by the sending school.

Any student transferring from homeschool or a school that is not accredited by ADE to a District school shall be evaluated by District staff to determine the student's appropriate grade placement. In the event that a student

has no grades or transcript, the receiving school shall evaluate for proper placement.

The District will comply with the laws of Arkansas and regulations of the State Board of Education in its admission practices. Further, the PCSSD admission practices will be constructed in a manner consistent with the desegregation plan and student assignment plan of the District as approved by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas.

F. Absences (See [Board Policy 4.7](#))

If any student's Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan conflicts with this policy, the requirements of the student's IEP or 504 Plan will take precedence.

Education is more than the grades students receive in their courses. Important as that is, students' regular attendance at school, whether in person or digitally, is essential to their social and cultural development and helps prepare them to accept the responsibilities they will face as an adult. Interactions with other students and participation in the instruction within the classroom enrich the learning environment and promote a continuity of instruction, which results in higher student achievement.

Absences for students enrolled in synchronous digital courses shall be determined in the same manner as for District students attending courses in person.

Excused Absences

Excused absences are those where the student was on official school business or when the absence was due to one of the following reasons:

1. The student's illness or when attendance could jeopardize the health of other students. A maximum of 6 such days are allowed per semester unless the condition(s) causing such absences is of a chronic or recurring nature, is medically documented in a written note or email from the parent, and approved by the principal;
2. Death or serious illness in their immediate family;
3. Observance of recognized holidays observed by the student's faith;
4. Attendance at an appointment with a government agency;
5. Attendance at a medical or dental appointment;
6. Exceptional circumstances with prior approval of the principal;
7. Participation in an FFA, FHA, or 4-H sanctioned activity;
8. Participation in the election poll workers program for high school students;
9. Absences granted to allow a student to visit his/her parent or legal guardian who is a member of the military and has been called to active duty, is on leave from active duty, or has returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting. The number of additional excused absences shall be at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee;
10. Absences granted, at the Superintendent's discretion, to 17 year-old students who join the Arkansas National Guard while in 11th grade to complete basic combat training between grades 11 and 12;
11. Absences for students excluded from school by the Arkansas Department of Health during a disease outbreak because the student has an immunization waiver or whose immunizations are not up to date.
12. Absences due to conditions related to pregnancy or parenting, including without limitation:
 - a. Labor, delivery, and recovery;
 - b. Prenatal and postnatal medical appointments and other medically necessary, pregnancy-related absences;
 - c. The illness or medical appointment of a child belonging to a parent who is enrolled at a District school;
 - d. A legal appointment related to pregnancy or parenting, including without limitation:
 - i. Adoption;
 - ii. Custody; and

- iii. Visitation.
- e. A reasonable amount of time to accommodate a lactating student's need to express breast milk or to breastfeed the student's child on the District's campus; and
- f. At least 10 school days of absences for both a parenting mother and a parenting father after the birth of a child.

Students who serve as pages for a member of the General Assembly shall be considered on instructional assignment and shall not be considered absent from school for the day the student is serving as a page.

Up to 1 time during each scheduled election, a student shall not be considered absent from school for the time the student accompanies the student's parent when the parent is exercising the parent's right to vote in a scheduled election.

In order for the absences noted above to be considered excused, the student must:

1. Bring a written statement or email to the principal or designee upon the student's return to school from the student's parent, legal guardian, or treating physician stating the reason for the student's absence;
2. If the student is attending the District's courses digitally, upload a written statement from the student's parent, legal guardian, or treating physician stating the reason for the student's absence through the District's digital course management platform for review by the principal or designee; or
3. Provide documentation as proof of a student's participation in an activity or program scheduled and approved by the 4-H program that is provided by a 4-H county extension agent, 4-H educator, or other appropriate entity associated with the 4-H activity or program.

A written statement presented or uploaded for an absence having occurred more than 5 school days prior to its presentation or upload will not be accepted.

Unexcused Absences

Absences that are not defined above do not have an accompanying note from the parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, person standing in loco parentis, the student's treating physician, or a 4-H county extension agent, 4-H educator, or other appropriate entity associated with the 4-H activity or program; or have an accompanying note that is not presented or uploaded within the timeline required by this policy shall be considered as unexcused absences. Students with 10 unexcused absences in a course in a semester may not receive credit for that course. At the discretion of the principal, after consultation with persons having knowledge of the circumstances of the unexcused absences, the student may be denied promotion or graduation. Excessive absences shall not be a reason for expulsion or dismissal of a student.

When a student has 5 unexcused absences, his/her parents, legal guardians, persons with lawful control of the student, or persons standing in loco parentis shall be notified. Notification shall be by telephone by the end of the school day in which such absence occurred or by regular mail with a return address sent no later than the following school day.

Whenever a student exceeds 10 unexcused absences in a semester, the District shall notify the prosecuting authority, and the parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, or persons standing in loco parentis shall be subject to a civil penalty as prescribed by law.

It is the Arkansas General Assembly's intention that students having excessive absences be given assistance in obtaining credit for their courses. Therefore, at any time prior to when a student exceeds the number of unexcused absences permitted by this policy, the student, or his/her parent, legal guardian, person with lawful control of the student, or person standing in loco parentis may petition the school or district's administration for special arrangements to address the student's unexcused absences. If formal arrangements are granted, they shall be

formalized into a written agreement, which will include the conditions of the agreement and the consequences for failing to fulfill the agreement's requirements. The agreement shall be signed by the student, the student's parent, legal guardian, the person having lawful control of the student, or the person standing in loco parentis, and the school or district administrator or designee.

Students who attend in-school suspension shall not be counted absent for those days.

Days missed due to out-of-school suspension or expulsion shall be unexcused absences.

The District shall notify the Department of Finance and Administration whenever a student 14 years of age or older is no longer in school. The Department of Finance and Administration is required to suspend the former student's operator's license unless he/she meets certain requirements specified in the statute.

G. Tardy Policy

A tardy is any time a student arrives after school begins or departs before the school day ends. If an elementary student misses 2.5 hours of daily instruction it will be considered a half-day absence. Secondary students who enter class within the first 15 minutes after the tardy bell will be considered tardy. Students who miss 30 minutes or more of a class period will be considered absent.

Section IV. Student Services



A. Locks, Lockers, Desk, and Other Student Storage Facilities

Locks, lockers, desks, and other student storage facilities are school-owned property. Students may only use a lock on lockers that has been issued by the school.

Desks and lockers are school property and remain, at all times, under the control of the school. School authorities may conduct periodic general inspections at any time for any reason. Inspection of individual lockers or desks may occur when there is a reasonable cause to do so. In those cases, the student and 2 adults shall be present.

B. Health Services

All PCSSD students must meet immunization requirements as set forth by the [Arkansas State Board of Health](#).

Kindergarten Immunizations

At least 4 doses of Diphtheria/Tetanus/Acellular Pertussis (DTaP), Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTP), or Diphtheria/Tetanus (DT pediatric) vaccine, with the last one being on or after the 4th birthday

At least 3 doses of Polio vaccine, with the last one being on or after the 4th birthday

2 doses of MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine

3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine

1 dose of Hepatitis A

2 doses of Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine. A medical professional's history of disease may be accepted in lieu of receiving Varicella vaccine. No self or parental history of varicella disease will be accepted.

1st through 12th grade Immunizations

3 or 4 doses of Diphtheria/Tetanus/Acellular Pertussis (DTaP), Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTP), Diphtheria/Tetanus (DT-pediatric), Tetanus/Diphtheria (Td-adult) or Tetanus/Diphtheria/Acellular Pertussis (Tdap) and one (1) dose of Tdap for ages 11 years (as of September 1 each year) and older or 3 doses for unvaccinated persons 7 years of age or older (including persons who cannot document prior vaccination)

At least 3 doses of Polio vaccine

2 doses of MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine

3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine

1 dose of Hepatitis A for 1st Grade

2 doses of varicella vaccine

1 or 2 doses of MCV4 (Meningococcal vaccine) with 1 dose for 7th grade and a 2nd dose at 16 years old (as of September 1 each year). However, if the first dose of Meningococcal vaccine is administered at age 16 years or older, no second dose is required. A medical professional's history of disease may be accepted in lieu of receiving Varicella vaccine. No self or parental history of varicella disease will be accepted.

Exception: If a student has previously received two doses of measles, one dose of mumps and one dose of rubella before January 1, 2010, the doses will be accepted as compliant to immunization requirements and 2 MMRs are not required.

Every child must have received all of the vaccines, be in-process of receiving needed doses, show proof that they have a letter from ADH approving serology as proof of immunity, or applied for an exemption for those vaccines he/she has not received in order to continue attendance. If the child does not meet the immunization requirements the child will be referred to a medical authority for immunization or consultation.

Administering Medicine To Students

It is the policy that no drug or medicinal preparation, except for medicines or medications used in first aid, will

be administered to students on any school premises by school personnel unless the student requires the medication in order to attend school. To ensure a safe method in dispensing medications to students, a current and valid doctor's prescription with instructions as well as a written request from the student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis must be provided to school personnel.

Guidelines

1. Only medications prescribed by a physician will be given at school.
2. All medication (both prescription and over the counter medicine) must be in a container/bottle with a prescription label noting the name of the student, medication name, dosage, and clear directions for administration.
3. School personnel are not authorized to determine when non-scheduled medications are needed, as this is a form of prescribing. However, there are times when as needed medication may be required. A physician statement must be provided giving specific instructions regarding how much, when, and how often the medication is to be given.
 - a. For the student's protection, the nurse or designee will not give a dosage of medication in excess of the recommended dosage on the label unless a physician's order is received.
4. The Medication Administration Record Form must be signed by the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis before any medication will be given at school. Handwritten notes are not acceptable.
5. No medication to be given 3 times daily or less will be administered at school unless a physician's statement specifically directs the medication be given at a certain time.
6. Building level personnel and school nurses will administer medicine to students according to Board Policy 4.35 Student Medications.
 - a. An exception will be made for students to carry/self administer asthma inhalers or emergency medications required for documented health conditions with a physician order and school nurse approval. An emergency health care plan and Medication Administration Record Form must be on file. A locked and limited access area for storage of medications will be provided.
7. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis shall be responsible for transporting medication to and from school unless other arrangements are made with the school nurse or principal. It is recommended that parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis bring a 1 month supply to school and note when more medicine is needed to prevent missed doses due to depleted supply. The quantity of medication will be counted and recorded when medication is brought to the school.
8. At the end of the school year, any unused medication must be picked up by parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis on or before the last day of school. All medication not picked up will be destroyed in the presence of a witness, unless prior arrangements have been made.
9. The initial dose of a new medication must be given by the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis outside of the school setting.
10. No sharing of any medication is permitted.
11. Narcotic pain medication will not be administered in the school setting. Students requiring this type of medication should stay at home.
12. The initial dose of a new medication must be given by the parent/guardian outside of the school setting.
13. No sharing of any medication is permitted.
14. Narcotic pain medication will not be administered in the school setting. Students requiring this type of medication should stay home.
15. All medication must be provided in the correct dosage prescribed by the physician. Any alteration to the medication pill required to provide dosage should be completed by the pharmacy or parent/guardian prior to bringing the prescription bottle to the school.
16. Any substance that does not have approval by the Food & Drug Administration will not be administered at school.

Communicable Diseases and Parasites (See Board Policy 4.34)

Students with communicable diseases or with human host parasites that are transmittable in a school environment shall demonstrate respect for other students by not attending school while they are capable of transmitting their condition to others. Students whom the school nurse determines are unwell, unfit for school attendance, or who are believed to have a communicable disease or condition will be required to be picked up by their parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis. Specific examples include, but are not limited to chickenpox, measles, scabies, conjunctivitis (pink eye), impetigo/MRSA (Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), streptococcal and staphylococcal infections, ringworm, mononucleosis, Hepatitis A, B, or C, mumps, vomiting, diarrhea, and fever (100.4 F when taken orally). A student who has been sent home by the school nurse will be subsequently readmitted, at the discretion of the school nurse, when the student is no longer a transmission risk. In some instances, a letter from a health care provider may be required prior to the student being readmitted to the school.

To help control the possible spread of communicable diseases, school personnel shall follow the District's exposure control plan when dealing with any bloodborne, foodborne, and airborne pathogen exposures. Standard precautions shall be followed relating to the handling, disposal, and cleanup of blood and other potentially infectious materials such as all body fluids, secretions, and excretions (except sweat). In instances where the probable spread is airborne diseases, students and district personnel will wear appropriate face coverings in all school facilities, outside school facilities when physical distancing is not possible, and when riding school buses when deemed appropriate by the PCSSD Board of Education.

The District shall maintain a copy of each student's immunization record and a list of individuals with exemptions from immunization which are considered education records as defined in Board Policy 4.13. That policy provides that an education record may be disclosed to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

A student enrolled in the District who has an immunization exemption may be removed from school at the discretion of ADH during an outbreak of the disease for which the student is not vaccinated. The student may not return to the school until the outbreak has been resolved and the student's return to school is approved by ADH.

The parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis of students found to have live human host parasites that are transmittable in a school environment will be asked to pick their child up at the end of the school day. The parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis will be given information concerning the eradication and control of human host parasites. A student may be readmitted after the school nurse or designee has determined the student no longer has live human host parasites that are transmittable in a school environment.

Each school may conduct screenings of students for human host parasites that are transmittable in a school environment as needed. The screenings shall be conducted in a manner that respects the privacy and confidentiality of each student.

Fever

For a fever greater than 100.4°F, the student must be picked up immediately by a parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis. The student may return to school after being fever free for 24 hours without using a fever reducing medication.

Head Lice

Head lice are a fairly common problem in school age children. They are most prevalent in the preschool and elementary populations. While head lice are a nuisance, they do not pose a significant health hazard and are not known to spread disease.

If a child is assessed as having head lice, confidentiality must be maintained so the child is not embarrassed. The child's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis should be notified that day and educated on the prompt, proper treatment of head lice.

When a student has suspected head lice:

1. The school nurse or trained staff member will assess the student with suspected head lice as needed to determine the action steps required.
2. If live adult lice are found, the student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis will be notified with instructions on how to ensure treatment guidelines are followed.
3. Students may be picked up from school by the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis upon identification of the head lice.
4. A head lice letter and treatment timeline will be sent home with the student.
5. Students will not be excluded from school for the identification of nits only and will be allowed to remain in class. Only students who have active head lice will be sent notification from the school nurse or building administrator.
6. A follow up assessment of the student will be completed by the school nurse or trained staff member within 7-10 days.
7. The parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis must provide proof of treatment to the school nurse or building administrator.
8. The student will be assessed by the school nurse or trained staff member after a head lice treatment has been administered at home by the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis within 7-10 days.
9. The parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis is instructed to ensure that all treatment guidelines have been followed so that re-infestation does not occur.
10. Screening of students who have close contact with the student at school will be assessed at the discretion of the school nurse.
11. The American Academy of Pediatric Physicians does not recommend that routine screenings of the entire school population be completed, nor any school wide notification occur when a student has head lice. Therefore, building wide screenings or notifications are not recommended.
12. If a student has frequent infestation of active adult head lice, the school nurse or trained staff member will assess each student in the appropriate classroom(s) as deemed necessary by the school nurse.

The best method of controlling an outbreak of head lice is by the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis doing regular checks of the child's hair and scalp at home.

Right to Privacy

The District/school shall respect the student's/employee's right to privacy and need for confidentiality. Therefore, the knowledge that a student/employee has an infectious/communicable disease will be confined to those with a direct need to know. Federal Law mandates this right be protected. (Adopted 12/12/78)

C. School-Based Health Clinic

The Pulaski County Special School District Health Center offers medical and behavioral health services for children of all ages. Quality healthcare is accessible to all students regardless of insurance status or their family's ability to pay.

In our onsite campus clinic, skilled providers offer wellness services during the school day including:

- Immunizations
- Physicals for school, sports, and general wellness
- Treatment of acute and chronic conditions
- Routine lab work

- Behavioral Health services

Children are seen during school hours while remaining in the safety and comfort of the school building. To make an appointment visit www.mainlinehealth.net. You do not need to be present at the appointment. Your child's healthcare provider will call you to discuss any next steps for treatment. The clinic is managed by Mainline Health Systems, Inc.

D. Student Nutrition

The goal of the Student Nutrition Department is to provide students with healthy, enjoyable meals each day. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Program, and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

Our District participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs sponsored by the USDA and is held to a high standard of accountability, nutrition, and safety. Healthy meals are an important part of a student's academic success. Breakfast and lunch are provided in all PCSSD schools and are available to any student wishing to participate in the school's food service program.

Meal Prices

Adult or non-student breakfast \$3.00; Adult or non-student lunch \$4.00

The differences between the adult and student prices are based on the USDA regulations. Students are subsidized for the meals and adults are not.

- Elementary Breakfast – NO CHARGE, Milk \$.50
- Elementary Lunch – Full Pay \$3.50, Reduced NO CHARGE, Milk \$.50
- Secondary Breakfast – NO CHARGE, Milk \$.50
- Secondary Lunch – Full Pay starting at \$3.75, Reduced NO CHARGE, Milk \$.50
- A la carte items are available in middle and high schools only. Payment is due upon the time of purchase and cannot be charged.

Payment for Meals

The District prefers that meals, a la carte, or other food and beverage items be purchased by either providing payment for the items at the time of receipt or by having a prepaid account with the District that may be charged for the items. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, or students choosing to do so, may pay in advance for meals, a la carte, or other food and beverage items through any of the following methods:

1. Submitting cash or check payment with your student or at your student's school main office. If you have more than one child in the same school, send one check for all students and specify name, grade, teacher and the amount you want on each child's account.
2. Pay online with EZ School Pay:
 - a. Go online to www.ezschoollpay.com;
 - b. Follow the instructions.

Meal Pattern/Offer vs Serve

At PCSSD, our meals meet USDA school breakfast and lunch guidelines. We offer 5 different food components to choose from daily: meat or protein, grains and bread, fruits, vegetables, and milk. Federal guidelines do not require students to take every item that is offered for breakfast or lunch. However, Nutrition Services encourages students to take, at minimum, 3 items for breakfast and 3 items for lunch that are offered to ensure a well-balanced meal.

Lunch - Each student selects the appropriate number of food items for a reimbursable meal. At lunch, 5 components are offered: meat (or meat alternate), grain, fruit, vegetable, and milk. At minimum, a student must select a fruit or vegetable and 2 other components.

Breakfast - Each student selects the appropriate number of food items for a reimbursable meal. At breakfast, 4 components are offered: meat (or meat alternate), grain, fruit, and milk. At minimum, a student must select a fruit and 2 other components.

Charge Policy and Collections Procedure

PCSSD does not provide credit for students to charge for meals, a la carte, or other food and beverage items available for purchase in school food service areas. We must limit the occurrence of charging for meals to no more than 5 charges to your student's account.

It is the policy of PCSSD to allow students to charge meals only when money is unavailable and the student would otherwise have to miss meal service. This is a courtesy extended to the student and should not occur on a regular basis. Money owed to the district from meal charging will be carried over to the following year.

Families wishing to avoid these charges when a student's account balance is not sufficient to cover the day's meal must send a lunch to school with the student. Families choosing not to send a packed lunch and not to pay meal charges may have negative account balances sent to an outside agency for collection.

A student's parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis will be contacted via phone call, text message, and/or email regarding a student's prepaid account balance every Friday when the student's account has fewer than \$5.00 remaining.

If a student is without money on a consistent basis, the administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents and families are encouraged to reach out to the Student Nutrition Department.

PCSSD operates a meal assistance program, which complies with federal guidelines. Meal assistance in the form of free or reduced price meals is available for both the breakfast and lunch programs. If you have a need for assistance you can:

1. Apply online at [pcssd.org](https://www.pcssd.org) for the quickest response.
 - a. <https://www.pcssd.org/o/pcssd/page/free-and-reduced-lunch>
2. Pick up a Free & Reduced Price Meal application from your school office at registration or from the school Cafeteria Manager anytime throughout the school year.
 - a. Fill out the application and return it to the school's Cafeteria Manager or mail it to the Student Nutrition Department at:

Pulaski County Special School District
Student Nutrition Office
1101 East Dixon Rd
Little Rock, AR 72206
501-234-2300
nutrition@pcssd.org

Once the application is received, a determination will be made within 10 days to see if your student(s) qualifies for Free or Reduced Priced Meals. Qualification is based on household income and family size. A complete application will include income information by source, Social Security number, and the signature of an adult household member. (Please keep a copy of the application for your reference). Until you receive a notification letter or email from the Student Nutrition Department that your student is eligible for free or reduced priced meals, full payment must be made for each meal received. Notification from any other source, or any means other than written, is not valid. Free and Reduced applications expire within 25 days of the following school term and we strongly recommend that each school term a new form be submitted. Applications become available July 1 of each school term.

Guidance

1. I.D. numbers and I.D. cards are not to be shared. Once a number or card has been used by someone other than your student and your student tries to eat using his/her card, a second meal will ask for payment. For elementary, a charge will be applied to the I.D. number and the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis will be responsible for those charges.
2. Regardless of free or reduced meal status, second meals will be charged at full price.
3. ADE rules state students may be given any food and/or beverage items during the school day for up to 9 different events each school year to be determined and approved by school officials. These items may not be given during meal times in the areas where school meals are being served or consumed.
4. Parties must be school-wide and every class would need to participate in these on the same day and all such days are required to be placed into eSchoolPlus prior to the school year beginning. Birthday parties for individual students are prohibited.
5. If you choose to bring your child food, it must be brought by the student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis at the student's lunch period. The parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis must check in at the front office, and hand-deliver the food to the student. Food can only be provided to your student and cannot be shared with other students. No 3rd party delivery companies will be accepted in the school.

Repayment plans

Each household may request a repayment plan that will include payment levels and due dates appropriate to a household's particular circumstances. Please contact nutrition@pcssd.org for establishing a repayment plan.

Bad Debt

Bad debt is determined to be uncollectible, with further collection efforts for delinquent debt deemed useless or too costly. Delinquent debt will be considered as bad debt after a scholar has graduated or becomes inactive in the district.

Bad debts including losses arising from uncollectible accounts and other claims are unallowable expenses to the child nutrition program. Related collection costs, and related legal costs, arising from such debts after they have been determined to be uncollectible are also unallowable (section 200.426 of subpart E).

Bad debt must be written off as an operating loss; the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA) resources may not be used to cover the costs related to the bad debt. These funds may come from the school district's general fund, school or community organizations, or any other non-federal source). Once delinquent meal charges are converted to bad debt, records relating to those charges must be maintained in accordance with record retention requirements in 7 CFR 210.9(b)(17) and 7 CFR 210.15(b).

Delinquent Debt

Delinquent debt is defined as overdue unpaid meal charges that are considered collectable, with efforts being made to collect them. The debt may remain on the accounting documents until it is either collected or determined to be uncollectible.

Food Allergy Policy

If your child has a food allergy to any item on the menu, a doctor's statement is required to be filed with the cafeteria manager and the school nurse stating the student's allergies to all such foods and the alternate food to be served.

Refunds

Meal account balances will remain with the student as long as they are enrolled in the District. If you leave the District, contact the Child Nutrition Director to process a refund. Graduating seniors will have 3 months following graduation to request a refund of meal balances; after a year, the balance will be transferred to a donation account for families experiencing financial difficulties in paying lunch balances.

The Student Nutrition Department will be glad to answer any questions concerning your student's meal account by emailing the Pulaski County Special School District Nutrition Services Office at Nutrition@pcssd.org.

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

E. Transportation

School buses are operated by PCSSD as an accommodation to students and parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis. Riding a bus is a privilege that must not be abused. The same appropriate behavior expected at school is expected on the school bus. A student's failure to conform to acceptable standards of behavior and courtesy will result in him/her being subject to disciplinary action. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis will be held financially responsible for damage to the inside/outside of the school bus. Students transported on PCSSD school buses will adhere to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and ADH regulations.

Transportation to Locations for Childcare

Due to fiscal and liability concerns, PCSSD shall not provide transportation services to a location for the purpose of providing care to students prior to or immediately following the instructional day. This policy has no impact on transportation services specified in a student's IEP or 504 plans.

Transportation Student Conduct

The Transportation Department is responsible for conducting thorough investigations into any reported incidents involving student behavior on the bus. This includes reviewing all relevant details, interviewing involved parties, and ensuring that appropriate disciplinary actions are taken. All discipline referrals related to student behavior will be

managed by the Transportation Department, ensuring that consistent and fair procedures are followed for addressing both minor and major infractions. The department will work closely with school administrators and parents as necessary to resolve issues and maintain a safe and respectful environment for all students. Student Infractions are categorized as either a minor or major occurrence.

All recommendations for expulsion of bus privileges will be referred to the Director of Student Services.

Infraction Code Key: The driver will use one of the following infraction codes that best describes the behavior when turning in a School Bus Disciplinary Referral on a student.

Minor Infractions	04 = Truancy; 13 = Vandalism; 14 = Insubordination; 15 = Disorderly Conduct; 17 = Other; 20 = Cell phone/Electronic device
Major Infractions	01 = Drug; 02 = Alcohol; 03 = Tobacco; 05 = Student Assault; 06 = Staff Assault; 07 = Knife; 08 = Handgun; 09 = Rifle; 10 = Shotgun; 11 = Club; 12 = Gangs; 16 = Explosives; 18 = Bullying; 19 = Fighting; 21 = Cyber bullying; 22 = Harassment/Sexual Harassment; 23 = Public Display of Affection; 24 = Stealing/Theft; 25 = Terroristic Threats

Minor Infractions

Minor Infractions on a school bus are generally less severe behaviors that do not pose an immediate threat to safety or well-being but still require attention to maintain order and discipline. Minor infractions include behaviors like vandalism, insubordination, disorderly conduct, and improper use of electronics. These are handled by the driver through conferences, documentation, and escalating referrals to the principal. Only after several infractions are the issues escalated beyond the bus driver level. Please note that Vandalism can also fall under major infractions.

The following is an explanation of the minor infractions:

1. Vandalism (Code 13): This refers to students damaging, defacing, or destroying property on the bus. This could include things like graffiti on the bus seats or breaking windows.
2. Minor Vandalism (Code 13): Typically involves less severe damage to the bus, such as minor scratches, small marks, or graffiti on the bus seats or walls. These may still require action but are not as damaging or costly as major acts of vandalism.
3. Major Vandalism (Code 13): When the damage becomes significant or intentional destruction, it is treated as a major infraction, such as breaking windows, cutting seats, damaging emergency equipment, spray painting or tagging, and breaking bus fixtures.
4. Insubordination (Code 14): This involves a student refusing to follow the bus driver's instructions or showing disrespect towards the driver. Examples include arguing with the driver, ignoring direct orders, or disobeying rules of behavior.
5. Disorderly Conduct (Code 15): This is a broad category that includes behaviors such as making loud noises, distracting other students, or behaving in a disruptive manner on the bus. It includes any behavior that interrupts the orderly operation of the bus but is not as severe as fighting or bullying.
6. Other (Code 17): This category is used for minor infractions that do not fall into the specific categories listed above but still require attention. It serves as a catch-all for less common minor infractions that the driver feels need to be documented.
7. Cell phone/Electronic device (Code 20): This refers to students using their cell phones or other electronic devices on the bus in violation of the bus rules. This might include talking on the phone, texting, playing games, or using electronic devices in a disruptive or distracting way during the ride.

Process for Handling Minor Infractions:

1. First Offense: Warning
2. Second Offense: Bus Driver/Student
3. Third Offense: Bus Driver/Transportation Administration/Parent Conference
4. Fourth Offense: Suspension 1 - 3 days
5. Fifth Offense: Suspension 3 - 5 days
6. Sixth Offense: Recommendation for Expulsion of bus riding privileges

Major Infractions

Major infractions which are more severe, have an immediate referral to the principal, with the supervisor and driver involved in the documentation process. Vandalism can also fall under major infractions, especially when the damage or destruction to the bus is severe or significant.

Contact Numbers

South Transportation Complex (Mills Feeder Pattern) 501-234-2915

Northwest Transportation Complex (Sylvan Hills and Maumelle Feeder Patterns) 501-234-2950

West Transportation Complex (Robinson Feeder Pattern) 501-234-2970

Section V. Other Policies



Students have the right to be immediately informed of alleged violations of standards of his/her behavior as established by Board policy and/or school regulations and to be informed of appeal procedures.

Students have the responsibility to know and obey school rules, to express grievances in a polite and hospitable manner, and to give his/her parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis correct information concerning misconduct. Principals and teachers have the responsibility to follow School Board established procedures in disciplinary actions against students. Principals are responsible for notifying and conferring with parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and students in cases involving suspension and expulsion recommendations. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis have the responsibility to call the principal for a conference when needed, and to arrange with proper school authorities for desired student hearings.

A. Parent/Student Process for Complaints/Appeals

If a student and/or the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis of the student involved in a disciplinary ruling wishes to contest the ruling or a condition or circumstance imposed by a teacher or school administrator, the procedure which follows should be used by the person filing the complaint. All complaints must be submitted in writing.

1. The complaint must be directed to the person who originally took the action upon which the complaint is based. The person shall reconsider his/her action and give his/her decision to the complainant.
2. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, the complaint must be directed to the immediate superior of the person who took the original action. If the complaint is directed to a teacher, the immediate superior would be the building principal. If the complaint is directed to a principal and involves an academic problem, the immediate superior would be the Deputy Superintendent for Learning Services or his/her designee. If the problem involves a disciplinary action, the principal's immediate superior would be the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services or his/her designee. The superior or his/her designee shall review the original action which was taken and render a decision or suggest a solution which might be mutually satisfactory to all parties.
 - a. If either party is not satisfied with the decision of the superior, the complaint may be directed to the Superintendent.
3. The Board of Education delegates to the Superintendent the authority to review the complaint and issue a decision regarding the complaint. In regard to suspension and due process, the decision of the Superintendent will be final.

Note: Only the Board of Education may expel a student from school on concurrence of the Superintendent. A recommendation for expulsion will be made from the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Director of Student Services, and principal. The Board of Education may expel a student for the remainder of the semester, for the remainder of the school year, or permanently.

B. Procedures for School Investigations

An investigation will be promptly initiated when a complaint or a report of misconduct is received.

Complaints/reports will be processed based on the severity of the report and mandated due process.

The PCSSD administration recognizes that every situation is different. When a complaint is made or a report is submitted, the following process shall be used as a general guideline for conducting an investigation:

1. The complaining party will be provided with the appropriate form.
2. Initiate investigation in a timely manner.
3. Immediately notify the central office to relay information or for guidance, when applicable. This may include Directors of Education, the Director of Student Services, Coordinator of Safety and Security, or the Executive Director of Communications.

4. Immediately notify school officials in your building who should be involved in the investigation (nurse, food services manager or director, school or District security).
5. If parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis are not the complaining party, they will be informed that an investigation is pending.
6. Surveillance cameras will be checked, when available, for footage of the incident that is the subject of the complaint. Arrangements will be made to provide the Director of Student Services with a copy of the surveillance footage. If the incident occurred on a school bus, the bus pound and the Director of Transportation will be contacted to obtain the surveillance footage. The school shall request that footage is saved/copied as evidence through the PCSSD Department of Safety and Security.
7. School administrators will take written statements from all parties involved (e.g. students, staff, parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis, etc.). This includes witnesses on both sides of the allegation. Evidence should reflect a distinction between what was seen or what was heard. When possible, witnesses should write their own statements on the witness statement form.
8. If applicable, notify outside agencies who should be involved in the investigation (police, DHS-800-482-5964). All staff members are mandated reporters.
9. The findings will be documented and the persons involved will be notified in writing, when applicable.

Reminders:

1. Copies of written statements may be shared upon request only if the name of the student has been removed.
2. Confidentiality must be a priority. Consequences administered to students cannot be shared with other parties.
3. All requests to view on-campus surveillance footage should be forwarded to the Director of Student Services. Surveillance footage may be viewed at the discretion of the Director of Student Services.
4. All requests to view bus surveillance footage should be forwarded to the Director of Transportation. Surveillance footage may be viewed at the discretion of the Director of Transportation.
5. All human resources policies and procedures must be considered.
6. Administrators are always required to investigate parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis concerns. Any reports made to police or another outside agency do not negate our responsibility to investigate.

Due process for Section 504 and IDEA must be followed.

C. Procedures for Filing SexualHarassment Complaints

All complaints of sexual harassment will be taken seriously by PCSSD. District officials will cooperate with law enforcement as well as thoroughly investigate allegations of sexual harassment involving staff members independently.

All parties involved will be provided a notice of allegations including all known details. Parties will be provided with sufficient time to respond to the allegations, if they choose to.

A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator (Assistant Superintendent for Student Services) in person, by mail, or by email. The District cannot begin an investigation of Title IX sexual harassment unless the Title IX coordinator takes the rare step, based on the specific circumstances of the allegations, to file the formal complaint against the wishes of the complainant. Students who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment, or the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis who believes their student has been subjected to sexual harassment, are encouraged to bring their concerns to any District staff member, including a counselor, teacher, Title IX coordinator, or administrator.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the District shall simultaneously provide the following written notice to the

parties who are known:

1. Notice of the District's grievance process and a copy of the procedure governing the grievance process.
2. Notice of the allegations of sexual harassment including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before an initial interview. Sufficient details include:
 - a. The identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known.
 - b. The conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment.
 - c. The date and location of the alleged incident, if known.
3. A statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
4. That the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.
5. The parties may inspect and review evidence relevant to the complaint of sexual harassment.
6. That the District's code of conduct prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If in the course of an investigation, the District decides to investigate allegations about the complainant or respondent that are not included in the previous notice, the District will simultaneously provide notice of additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

The District may consolidate formal complaints of allegations of sexual harassment where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances and the formal complaints are against more than one respondent; or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents; or by one party against the other party. When the District has consolidated formal complaints so that the grievance process involves more than one complainant or more than one respondent, references to the singular "party," "complainant," or "respondent" include the plural, as applicable. For more information, contact the PCSSD TitleIX Coordinator at 501-234-2021.

D. Expression

Students have the right to express opinions and to support causes without interference from school authorities except when such actions are unlawful or disruptive to learning.

1. Verbal Expression
 - a. Students have the right to free and dynamic expression of ideas including personal opinion. Students have the right to opportunities for expressing themselves verbally within the classroom and through other established settings within the school.
 - b. Students have the responsibility to refrain from engaging in offensive obscenity and slander; to avoid speaking in such a way that disrupts the educational process; and to avoid speaking solely for the purpose of infringing upon the rights of others. Students, teachers, and other school staff have the responsibility to communicate in a courteous, non-hostile manner.
2. Written Expression
 - a. Students have the right to distribute or post printed material (pamphlets, posters, leaflets, newspapers, brochures, circulars, and petitions) subject to individual building procedures and in accordance with Board of Education policies.
3. Symbolic Expression
 - a. Students have the right to symbolic expression (the wearing of insignia, hairstyle, clothing, physical gestures) which does not (a) cause disruption of the education process, (b) infringe upon the rights of other students and faculty, (c) prevent the Board of Education from performing its statutory obligations, or (d) cause accidents or endanger the health or physical well-being of students or faculty.
 - b. The primary responsibility for dress, grooming and overall appearance of students rests with the parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis of individual students and the students themselves. Students have the responsibility to ensure that (a) buttons, badges, clothing, and

other symbols do not contain obscene or libelous words, phrases, or pictures, or depict alcohol, drugs, and/or tobacco products; (b) that hairstyles do not interfere with the health and safety of all students; (c) that clothing does not result in overt exhibitionism or disregard of common rules of cleanliness and health and safety standards, (d) that no flag or banner is publicly displayed that disrupts the educational environment; and (e) that physical gestures do not convey a connotation of obscene or highly disrespectful acts, infringe upon the rights of others, or cause or begin an overt and immediate disruption of the educational process. School staff has the responsibility to ensure adherence to the above standards.

4. Anti-Hate Commitment

- a. The education and safety of our students is a top priority in PCSSD. PCSSD takes a firm stance against hate in all forms at all levels. We are all responsible for nurturing anti-hate educational learning environments in order to ensure that each and every child is respected and valued for who they are regardless of age, race, creed, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, or veteran status. PCSSD will continue to create inclusive educational environments where every student feels a sense of belonging and is treated with dignity and respect.

E. Assembly

Students have the right to arrange and participate in curriculum related activities in or on school property in accordance with the building level policies of the principal.

Students have the right to arrange and participate in non-curricular activities in or on school property during non-instructional time (time set aside by the school before actual classroom instruction begins or after actual classroom instruction ends) in accordance with the School Board's limited open forum policy (the practice of providing equal access and a fair opportunity to obtain space to any students wishing to conduct a meeting or meetings without regard to religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings).

Students have the responsibility to consult with and follow building level policies as set by the School Board and described by the principal when planning any student activity to be held on school property before, during, or after the school day.

Should attendance at a planned assembly not be required and students choose not to participate, they have the responsibility to report to an assigned area. Students attending a planned assembly have the responsibility to provide courteous attention.

F. Patriotic and Religious Exercises

Students have the right to participate in or abstain from such exercises as the flag salute, oaths or pledges, anthems, and religious observances.

Students have the responsibility to respect the choice of those who choose to participate or abstain from such exercises. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and students have the responsibility to express to principals, for appropriate action, their religious or ethical objections to participating in selected features or class activities.

Section VI. Student Conduct



A. Response to Intervention (RTI)

RTI is a multi-tiered preventive system designed to improve learning or behavioral outcomes for all students.

RTI is designed to accomplish three important goals:

1. Ensure all students receive research based instruction;
2. Provide progress monitoring tools that will be utilized in making data-based decisions in terms of interventions and enrichment; and
3. Provide a more practical method of identifying students with specific learning needs.

The idea of RTI is to catch learners when they begin to have academic and/or behavioral concerns. This process, based on scientific research, is a safety net for all learners thereby assuring that all students achieve their maximum potential through collaborative, supportive, and continuous efforts of all stakeholders.

For additional information about RTI, contact the Deputy Superintendent of Learning Services

B. Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS)

PBIS is a proactive and positive approach to discipline, an integrated system which enhances academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. PBIS is a multitiered preventive framework in which all students are taught the school's 3-5 behavioral expectations across settings such as the bus, cafeteria, playground or common area, restroom, hallway, classroom, etc. Each school has a positive reinforcement system, in which students earn points for meeting behavioral expectations. Schools respond to inappropriate behavior through the school's discipline management plan, which includes a list of minor behaviors and supports that are managed by teachers.

C. Discipline Management Plan (DMP)

The DMP is an intervention framework to address the District's goal of eliminating disparities in school discipline by providing discipline management options for minor behaviors.

The DMP are school-specific interventions to address minor behaviors that do not involve a major disruption of education services. Students shall comply with reasonable instructions from administrators, teachers, instructional assistants, school bus drivers, or any authorized District employee. After the school personnel has followed the DMP for minor behaviors and the student still does not comply with any school personnel, then a referral will be issued.

D. Restorative Practice

Restorative practice is a strategy the District uses to improve school culture and reduce discipline disparities. These practices focus on building relationships and creating community among stakeholders while minimizing punitive disciplinary measures.

Teen Court/Juvenile Justice

Juvenile Justice is a practical program of legal education designed to engage high school students in a critical examination of their legal responsibilities and rights. In this elective, students have the opportunity to conduct discussions, research and debate with their classmates about practical legal problems, contemporary legal issues, and the ramifications of breaking the law. By providing students with a non-adversarial view of the law, Juvenile Justice works to provide an understanding of the fundamental principles of authority, fairness, justice and responsibility that underlie our legal system. By demystifying the law, Juvenile Justice will help young people to develop a positive attitude towards the law and reduce juvenile delinquency. Students enrolled in this course are also members of Teen Court; a student-administered court that hears cases for minor infractions of students at PCSSD high schools. Students serve as the master jurors, bailiffs, reporters, and clerks. Court members do not determine guilt or innocence, but they do impose sanctions that reflect restorative justice

principles that hold their peers accountable.

Restorative Circles

A restorative circle is a versatile practice that can be used proactively to develop relationships and build community, or reactively to respond to wrongdoing, conflicts, and problems. Restorative circles give people an opportunity to speak and listen to one another in an atmosphere of safety, decorum, and equality. The restorative circle process allows people to tell their stories and offer their own perspectives. The restorative circle has a wide variety of purposes: conflict resolution, healing, support, decision making, information exchange, and relationship development. Restorative circles offer an alternative to contemporary meeting processes that often rely on hierarchy, win-lose positioning, and argument.

E. Consequences and Infractions

Discipline is designed to improve conduct and encourage students to adhere to their responsibilities as members of the school community. Disciplinary action will draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of discipline management techniques, including restorative discipline practices. Discipline will be correlated to the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and the statutory requirements. Because of these factors, discipline for a particular offense including misconduct in a vehicle owned or operated by the District (unless otherwise specified by law) may bring into consideration varying techniques and responses. School safety will be the primary determinant for actions taken by administrators regarding student behavior.

The District's administrators may also take disciplinary action against a student for off campus conduct occurring at any time that would have a detrimental impact on school discipline, the educational environment, or the welfare of the students and/or staff. A student who has committed a criminal act while off campus and whose presence on campus could cause a substantial disruption to school or endanger the welfare of other students or staff is subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Such acts could include, but are not limited to, a felony or an act that would be considered a felony if committed by an adult, an assault or battery, drug law violations, or sexual misconduct of a serious nature. Any disciplinary action pursued by the District shall be in accordance with the student's appropriate due process rights.

The District's student discipline policies shall be distributed to and reviewed with each student during the first week of school each year and new students upon their enrollment. The constitutional rights of individuals assure the protection of due process of law; therefore, this system of constitutionally and legally sound procedures is approved with regard to the administration of discipline in PCSSD.

The minimum penalty for student misconduct will be a reprimand/warning and the maximum penalty will be recommendation to expel by the District Board of Education and legal action dependent upon the severity and frequency of the misconduct. Discipline actions should become progressively more severe if the student continues to violate District rules. At any point during the progressive discipline process a parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis, teacher(s), student, administrator conference may be held to develop a behavior plan. The plan will be issued to all of that student's teachers, counselors, and administrators. The administrator may choose the most severe penalty at any time based on the circumstances involved in the particular incident. An administrator may not use a less severe consequence on any given rule without conferencing with the referring teacher. Any violation of Arkansas law will result in a minimum consequence of OSS to the maximum of recommendation to expel.

The range of consequences is as follows:

- Reprimand/Warning
- Parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis contact

- Parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis conference
- In-School Intervention
- Detention
- Class Suspension
- Saturday School
- In-School Suspension
- Out-of-School Suspension
- Elementary Disciplinary Hearing
- School Suspension with Recommendation to Expel
- Notification to Legal Authorities (when applicable)
- Other (with Parental Consent)

1. Bullying/Cyberbullying (18/21)

Bullying is the intentional, repetitive harassment, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, malicious teasing, defamation, threat, or incitement of violence by a student against another student or a school employee. Bullying may occur through written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that causes or creates a clear and present danger of physical or perceived emotional harm, or damage to school or student property. This includes, but not limited to, bullying or cyberbullying based on age, race, creed, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, or veteran status.

- i. a. Minimum: In-School-Suspension
- ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel

2. Disorderly Conduct (15)

- a. No student shall disrupt the lawful assembly of persons by engaging in inappropriate behavior that substantially interferes with, or is likely to interfere with, any school function, activity, or school program. Additionally, a student will not use any verbal or written form of profane, violent, vulgar, abusive, insulting, or sexual language at any time toward public school employees. A student will not use physical gestures that convey a connotation of obscene or disrespectful acts, infringe upon the rights of others, or cause or begin an overt and immediate disruption of the educational process.

- i. Minimum: In-School Suspension
- ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel

3. Drug/Alcohol (01/02)

- a. Possession, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, illegal drug, unauthorized inhalants, or the inappropriate use or sharing of prescription or over-the-counter drugs or other intoxicants, or anything represented to be a drug to include any related drug paraphernalia
- b. The student/family must show proof that they are enrolled with a counseling agency recognized by the District. Notification is required to appropriate legal authorities. The student will be suspended immediately, reported to legal authorities and may result in recommendation for expulsion.

- i. Minimum: Out-of-School Suspension
- ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel

4. Insubordination (14)

- a. Failure to comply with reasonable directives of authorized school personnel and established school/classroom expectations for behavior, including disruptive behavior
- b. Out of designated area
- c. Elementary
 - i. Minimum: Reprimand/Warning
 - ii. Maximum: Out-of-School Suspension, (in compliance with current law).
- b. Secondary

- i. Minimum: Reprimand/Warning
 - ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel
- 5. Tobacco/Nicotine (03)
 - a. A student may not smoke, have possession or control of any tobacco/nicotine products, tobacco related substances, smoking paraphernalia (matches, lighters, vape, etc.) on school property, including school buses, at any time.
 - i. Minimum: Out-of-School Suspension
 - ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel
- 6. Truancy (04)
 - a. A student will not be absent from school without parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis or school authorities' prior knowledge and consent.
 - i. Minimum: Parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis conference
 - ii. Maximum: In-School Suspension
- 7. Weapons (11)
 - a. No student shall possess, use, threaten to use, or otherwise be involved with any firearm, weapon, replica weapon, or any other instrument that is capable of inflicting physical injury or death. Weapons are prohibited by law upon any school property, including school bus, at designated bus stops, or at any school-related event. **Does not include toy guns.**
 - i. Students will be suspended immediately, reported to legal authorities, and recommended for expulsion for a period of not less than 1 year.
- 8. Vandalism (13)
 - a. No student shall purposely and without legal justification destroy or damage any property of another individual or belonging to the District. The parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis will be responsible for all damages to property caused by the student.
 - i. Minimum: In-School Suspension
 - ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel
- 9. Fighting (19)
 - a. Physical blows or contact mutually exchanged between students is considered fighting. Alternate punishment may be applied with regard to actual involvement.
 - i. Minimum: Out-of-School Suspension
 - ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel
- 10. Gangs (12)
 - a. Gangs which initiate, advocate, or promote activities which threaten the safety or well-being of persons or property on school grounds or school sponsored activity, or which disrupt the school environment and/or school activity are harmful to the education process.
 - b. The use of hand signals, handshakes, gestures, graffiti, or the presence of any clothing, bandannas, jewelry, accessory, or manner of grooming which, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, symbol, or any other attribute which indicates or implies membership or affiliation with such a group, presents a clear and present danger. This is contrary to the school environment and educational objectives and creates an atmosphere where unlawful acts or violations of school regulations may occur.
 - c. Recruiting, soliciting, or encouraging any person through duress or intimidation to become or remain a member of any gang are prohibited.
 - d. Extorting payment from any individual in return for protection from harm from any gang is prohibited.
 - i. Minimum: Out-of-School Suspension
 - ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel
- 11. Public Display of Affection (23)
 - a. A public display of affection is inappropriate school behavior. Refusal to comply with reasonable

expectations from school staff will lead to disciplinary action. Students shall not touch other students in a sexual manner.

- i. Minimum: Parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis Conference
- ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel

12. Assault on a Student (05)

- a. A student commits an offense that results in physical harm to another student, or recklessly engages in conduct that creates a substantial risk of death or serious physical injury to another student.
 - i. Minimum: Out-of-School Suspension
 - ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel

13. Assault on a School Employee (06)

- a. A student commits an offense when they willfully and intentionally assault or attempt to assault or physically abuse a school employee.
 - i. Minimum: Out-of-School Suspension
 - ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel

14. Theft (24)

- a. A student shall not steal or attempt to steal an individual's property. Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis of any minor student under the age of 18 will be liable for property stolen by said minor.
- b. If a student steals or is in possession of school property worth \$500 or more will be charged with theft of school property and is subject to prosecution.
- c. Elementary
 - i. Minimum: Parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis Conference
 - ii. Maximum: In-School Suspension
- d. Secondary
 - iii. Minimum: Out-of-School Suspension
 - iv. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel

15. Sexual Harassment/Sexual Misconduct (26)

- a. Sexual harassment is unwanted verbal, written, or physical behavior of a sexual nature; physical intimidation and mockery or scorn. Such behavior is prohibited.
- b. Sexual activity or sexual misconduct includes possession of or distribution of pornographic media. Students shall not touch other students in a sexual manner.
- c. Elementary
 - i. Minimum: Parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis Conference
 - ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel
- d. Secondary
 - iii. Minimum: Out-of-School Suspension
 - iv. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel

16. Harassment (22)

- a. A student shall not engage in conduct or repeatedly commit an act that alarms or seriously annoys another person and serves no legitimate purpose. This includes, but not limited to, harassment based on age, race, creed, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, or veteran status.
 - i. Minimum: Parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis Conference
 - ii. Maximum: Out-of-School Suspension

17. Terroristic Threats (25)

- a. Students shall not, with the purpose of terrorizing another person, threaten to cause death or serious physical injury or substantial property damage to another person, including teachers or school employees.

NOTE: Threats conveyed with a weapon shall be reported to the police immediately by the

administrator. Also, threats to cause death or serious physical injury to teachers or employees is a felony.

- i. Minimum: Out-of-School Suspension
- ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel

18. Explosives (16)

- a. No student shall possess, activate, or threaten to use any fireworks or explosive devices of any kind on school grounds, school bus or bus stop, or at school sponsored activities. A student shall not threaten to cause a fire or bombing, activate a bomb, fire alarm, or cause an evacuation.
- b. Elementary
 - i. Minimum: Parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis Conference
 - ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel
- c. Secondary
 - iii. Minimum: Out-of-School Suspension
 - iv. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel

19. Electronic Devices (20) ACT 122 of 2025 Bell to Bell, No Cell Act

- a. Purpose: Pulaski County Special School District Board of Education recognizes that electronic devices, including cell/smartphones, are an integral part of our everyday world, and through instant communication may add to the wellbeing of students. While in general, the PCSSD Board of Education acknowledges that electronic devices have value, the Board also recognizes the possibility that these devices may distract or disrupt an educational environment. Therefore, limited use of student and employee electronic devices will be permitted but must strictly follow the prescribed guidelines.
- b. Definition: A personal electronic device (PED) is:
 - i. a cell/smartphone, smart watches, a computer, and any other device that is capable of transmitting, receiving, or recording messages, images, sounds, data, or other information by electronic means or that, in appearance, purpose to be a cell phone, computer, or such other device;
 - ii. a camera, regardless of whether it operates electronically, mechanically, or otherwise and regardless of whether images are recorded by using digital technology, film, light-sensitive plates, or other means; or
 - iii. any other device that can connect and transmit data through Bluetooth Technology. The school is not responsible for loss, damage, or theft of any electronic device, including cell phones brought to school or confiscated due to a violation of the policy.
- c. Elementary:
 - i. Students are prohibited from the use of PEDs during the school day. Any student caught violating this policy will have their PEDs confiscated. The school is not responsible for loss, damage, or theft of any PEDs including cell phones brought to school and/or onto district property.
 - ii. PED Use Consequences:
 - 1. 1st Offense: Parent/Administrator contact, electronic device confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day.
 - 2. 2nd Offense: Parent/Administrator in-person conference, electronic device confiscated and returned to parent/guardian.
 - 3. 3rd Offense: Parent/Administrator contact, electronic device confiscated and returned to parent/guardian at the end of the school year. The student will lose all electronic device privileges for the remainder of the school year.
 - 4. Refusal to turn over electronic devices will result in an automatic 4-day suspension. Progressive discipline will be applied.
- d. Secondary:
 - i. Students are prohibited from the use of PEDs during the school day. PEDs must be turned

off and out of sight.

Daily Process for Middle School: PEDs are not to be used during school. Every student who owns PEDs will be assigned a personal Yondr Pouch. While the Yondr Pouch is considered school property, it is each student's responsibility to bring their Pouch with them to school every day and keep it in good working condition. As students arrive to school, they will:

1. Turn their PEDs off.
2. Place their phone, air pods/earbuds, and smart watch, etc. inside their Pouch and secure it.
3. Store their Pouch in their backpack/locker for the day.
4. At the end of the day, students will unlock their Pouch, remove their phone and other items and put their Pouch in their backpack. Students must bring their Pouch to school with them each day.
5. NOTE: Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/unpouch their phones in the Main Office.

Pouch Violations: The student will be assessed a \$30 replacement fee for the following:

1. Tampering with the Pouch: Any physical damage to the Pouch intended to bypass its purpose (e.g., inappropriate markings, holes, bent pin, stripped lock, use of a non-authorized magnet to open the pouch, etc.) will be treated as a violation.
2. Repeated loss or forgetfulness.
3. Damaging or taking another's Pouch.

ii. **Daily Process for Jr High/High Schools**

1. Jr High/High School students will turn off all PEDs at the beginning of each school day before entering the building.
2. PED's will be stored in the student locker, chromebook bag or backpack during the school day.

iii. **PED Use Consequences:**

1. 1st Offense: Parent/Administrator conference and device confiscated and returned to parent/guardian.
2. 2nd Offense: In-School Suspension- 2 days and returned to parent/guardian.
3. 3rd Offense: Suspension—2 days and phone confiscated until the end of the year. The student will lose all electronic device privileges for the remainder of the school year.
4. Refusal to turn over electronic devices will result in an automatic 4-day suspension. Progressive discipline will be applied.

e. **EXEMPTIONS:**

- i. To the extent it is approved in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 plan, or for health reasons.
- ii. For a student who is enrolled in an endorsed concurrent enrollment course at an institution of higher education in order to use the two-factor authentication to access course work and resources for the endorsed concurrent enrollment course.
- iii. After a school day for extracurricular activities.
- iv. During an emergency.
- v. Issued by the school district during the school day.

20. Other/Behavior Not Covered

- a. PCSSD reserves the right to pursue disciplinary or legal action for behavior which is subversive to good order and discipline in the schools even though such behavior is not specified in written rules (infraction will be specified).
 - i. Minimum: Reprimand/Warning
 - ii. Maximum: Recommendation to Expel

F. In School Suspension (ISS)

ISS is for the assignment of students in lieu of OSS. The District created ISS as a means of assisting schools in reducing the number of OSS students. Students who refuse to attend an ISS assignment may receive the equivalent days of an OSS.

Guidelines:

1. Students may be assigned to ISS in lieu of an OSS.
2. Students may not be assigned any more than 5 days per assignment.
3. Classroom work will be provided by the student's teachers each day of the assignment to ISS.
4. Supplemental materials for standardized test preparation may be utilized in the ISS classroom.

During the period of their suspension, students in ISS shall not attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities during the imposed suspension.

G. Detention Hall

Detention hall may be assigned depending upon the rule violated as determined by the school administration. This is an alternative program offered by PCSSD to keep students in school. The detention hall is coordinated at the local school level by the building principal. Students who do not attend detention hall may receive 1 day of ISS. Progressive discipline may apply.

H. Out-of-School Suspension (See [Board Policy 4.30](#))

PCSSD strives to find ways to keep students in school as participants in the educational process. However, there are times when the needs of the other students or the interests of the orderly learning environment require the removal of a student from school. OSS should not exceed 10 school days. Students are responsible for their conduct that occurs:

- At any time on school grounds;
- Off school grounds at a school-sponsored function, activity, or event; and
- Going to and from school or a school activity.

A student may be suspended for behavior including, but not limited to:

1. Violation of school policies, rules, or regulations;
2. Substantially interferes with the safe and orderly educational environment;
3. School administrators believe will result in the substantial interference with the safe and orderly educational environment; and/or
4. Insubordinate, incorrigible, violent, or involves moral turpitude.

OSS shall not be used to discipline a student in kindergarten through 5th grade unless the student's behavior:

- Poses a physical risk to himself/herself or to others;
- Causes a serious disruption that cannot be addressed through other means; or
- Is the act of bringing a firearm on school campus.

OSS shall not be used to discipline a student for skipping class, excessive absences, or other forms of truancy.

The school principal or designee shall proceed as follows in deciding whether or not to suspend a student:

1. The student shall be given written notice or advised orally of the charges against him/her;
2. If the student denies the charges, he/she shall be given an explanation of the evidence against him/her and be allowed to present his/her version of the facts; and
3. If the principal finds the student guilty of misconduct, he/she may be suspended.

Notice of the suspension, its duration, and any stipulations for the student's readmittance to class will be given to the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis or to the student if age 18 or older prior to the suspension by hand and mailed to the last address reflected in the records of the District.

Generally, notice and hearing should precede the student's removal from school, but if prior notice and hearing are not feasible, as where the student's presence endangers persons or property or threatens disruption of the academic process, thus justifying immediate removal from school, the necessary notice and hearing should follow as soon as practicable.

It is the responsibility of a student's parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis to provide current contact information to the District, which the school shall use to immediately notify the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis upon the suspension of a student. The notification shall be made via direct contact by phone. If the administrator is unable to reach the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis via a phone call, other means may be taken such as voice mail, text message, email, or regular first class letter to the last known mailing address.

The school shall keep a log of contacts attempted and made to the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis.

The District shall establish programs, measures, or alternative means and methods to continue student engagement and access to education during a student's period of OSS.

During the period of their suspension, students serving OSS are not permitted on campus except to attend a student/parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis/administrator conference or when necessary as part of the District's engagement or access to education program.

Suspensions initiated by the principal or his/her designee may be appealed to the Superintendent, but not to the School Board.

Suspensions initiated by the Superintendent may be appealed to the School Board.

I. Probation

The principal, or designee, may place any student who has been involved in an act of misconduct on probation in addition to suspension. School personnel must, however, perform an investigation of the situation; provide formal notice to the student and parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis, and an opportunity for a parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis conference. Probation should be for a definite period during which critical examination and evaluation of the student's progress is to take place.

J. Disciplinary Hearings

Disciplinary Hearings are district-level proceedings that remove expulsion as an option or consequence.

Disciplinary Hearings are held at the individual school with the administrative hearing officers and all other pertinent personnel who have had interaction with the student and/or situation in question, when feasible. The difference between the disciplinary hearing and expulsion hearings is that expulsion is not considered for a disciplinary hearing; with this exception, all other requirements remain the same.

Disciplinary Hearings can be held at the middle school and high school levels with prior consultation and approval of the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and/or Director of Student Services.

K. Expulsion (See [Board Policy 4.31](#))

1. When a student is suspended by a principal and recommended for expulsion the parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis will promptly be notified, in writing, of the reason(s) and the procedure to be followed if readmission is sought. The parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis will be required to sign a statement of receipt. The expulsion recommendation must be signed by the principal.
2. A hearing on the recommendation for expulsion will be conducted by the administrative hearing officer if a request is made in writing within 10 calendar days from the date of the aforesaid notice. The hearing officer will consider the appeal brought by parent/guardian/person standing in loco parentis and the position of the administration making the recommendation and then make a decision based upon equitable factors. This hearing will normally be conducted within 5 days after receiving the request for a hearing.
3. The findings and recommendation of the hearing officer will be final unless modified or rejected by the Superintendent of Student Services/or Board of Education. The hearing officer will furnish to the student or his/her representative complete instructions on his/her right to appeal to the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and/or Board of Education and the procedures to be followed. (The appeal request must be made in writing within (5 school contact days.)
4. No appeal will be heard by the Board of Education unless the student has appeared before the hearing officer and presented a written notification of appeal to the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services at least 5 days prior to the next regular School Board meeting, with the exception of students who are in possession of a firearm or who are involved in a fight with any weapon or other dangerous instrument. In these cases a written notification of appeal to the Board of Education must be made to the Superintendent at least 5 calendar days prior to the next regular School Board meeting.
5. An appeal hearing before the Board of Education will be conducted as follows:
 - a. General statement concerning the allegation(s) will be made by the principal or Assistant Superintendent for Student Services or the District hearing officer.
 - b. General statement on behalf of the student.
 - c. Presentation of evidence by the principal or his/her representative.
 - d. Presentation of evidence by the student or his/her representative in defense or mitigation of the allegation(s).
 - e. Rebuttal evidence by the principal if he/she so desires.
 - f. The Board of Education will then make a finding concerning the validity of the allegation(s). If the Board of Education finds the allegation(s) not to be true, this will terminate the hearing and no further action because of this matter will be taken against the student.
 - g. If the Board of Education finds the allegation(s) to be true, the principal will make a recommendation and may offer additional facts of evidence in support thereof. The recommendation need not necessarily be the same as the original recommendation made by the principal.
 - h. The student or his/her representative may elect to make a final statement in mitigation of the allegation(s) and recommendation of the principal.
 - i. The Board of Education will take final action on the recommendation of the principal and may approve, modify, or reject the recommendation.
6. In the absence of a request for a hearing before the hearing officer, the Board of Education will act upon the Superintendent's recommendation.
7. When, because of the circumstances, time is of the essence, the Board of Education and the Superintendent may waive and modify the time and notice provisions of this subsection when such action would be in the best interest of fairness and the furtherance of justice. When a student has been notified that he/she has been recommended for expulsion, he/she will remain away from the school premises pending resolution of the recommendation.

L. Discipline of Students Under IDEA and Section 504

A student with a disability under IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as defined by federal and state standards, who engages in inappropriate behavior is subject to normal school disciplinary procedures, provided the student's right to a free and appropriate public education is not violated.

The IEP team for an IDEA student with a disability or a Section 504 accommodation team for a 504 student should consider whether particular disciplinary procedures should be adopted for that student and included in the student's IEP or 504 Plan, if a disabled student's placement is to be changed for a period of time exceeding 10 school days. District special education or Section 504 personnel, whichever is applicable, will be consulted to ensure that proper due process procedures are followed.

Definitions



Parents are urged to read and discuss the following words and terms with their children before reading and discussing the Student Conduct section of the Handbook. While every effort has been made to make Handbook language simple, young students will need assistance in understanding the definitions and concepts used. (Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis should keep in mind that school personnel and personnel in the office of Assistant Superintendent for Student Services will be happy to be of assistance.)

1. Academic Dishonesty/Cheating/Plagiarism: To deliberately and/or deceitfully use and/or obtain materials to copy, duplicate, alter, or plagiarize printed or electronic matter belonging to or prepared by another person and claiming said work product as one's original work or design.
2. Active duty: Full-time duty status in the active, uniformed services of the United States, including without limitation, members of the National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders under 10 U.S.C. §§ 1209 and 1210.
3. ADH: Arkansas Department of Health
4. ALC: Alternative Learning Classroom
5. ALE: Alternative Learning Environment
6. AP: Advanced Placement
7. Artificial Intelligence - Software applications or platforms that utilize machine learning algorithms to perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence, such as generating content, providing recommendations, or solving problems. AI tools do not include the use of spell check or grammar check.
8. Assault: A student commits assault in the second degree if he or she recklessly engages in conduct that creates a substantial risk of physical injury to another student. A student commits assault in the first degree if he or she recklessly engages in conduct that creates a substantial risk of death or serious physical injury to another student.
9. Bullying: The intentional, repetitive harassment, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, malicious teasing, defamation, threat, or incitement of violence by a student against another student or a school employee. Bullying may occur through written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that causes or creates a clear and present danger of physical or perceived emotional harm, or damage to school or student property. This includes, but not limited to, bullying or cyberbullying based on age, race, creed, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, or veteran status.
10. Communicable Disease: Illnesses caused by viruses or bacteria that people spread to one another through contact with contaminated surfaces, bodily fluids, blood products, insect bites, or through the air. (Ex. cholera, covid-19, hepatitis, influenza, malaria, measles, or tuberculosis)
11. Cyberbullying: The use of electronic communication to bully a person.
12. Deployment: A period of time extending from 6 months before a member of the uniformed services' departure from their home station on military orders through 6 months after return to his/her home station.
13. DESE: Arkansas Department of Education Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

14. Detention Hall: Students who violate school rules may be assigned to supervised study periods held before, during or after regular school hours. When a student is assigned D-Hall before or after school, the parent is responsible for transportation to and from the school.
15. DMP: Discipline Management Plan is a specific initiative to address the District's goal of eliminating disparities in school discipline by providing discipline management options that do not involve a disruption of education services.
16. Disruptive Behavior: Open defiance or repeated refusal to follow the reasonable directives of any authorized school district employee.
17. Due Process: To guarantee that students will not have their rights taken away unfairly, there are established procedures which school personnel must follow.
18. Emergency: means a serious, unexpected, and dangerous situation that requires immediate action, including without limitation: an active fire, an active tornado or earthquake, an active shooter, an evacuation of school grounds, or medical emergency.
19. Eligible Child of Servicemember: The children of active duty members of the uniformed services; members of the active and activated reserve components of the uniformed services; members or veterans of the uniformed services who are severely injured and medically discharged or retired for a period of 1 year after medical discharge or retirement; and members of the uniformed services who die on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty for a period of 1 year after death.
20. Excessive Absence: Students shall not be absent more than 10 days in a semester. Whenever a student exceeds 10 absences in a semester, the District shall notify the prosecuting authority and the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis shall be subject to a civil penalty as prescribed by law.
21. Expulsion: Principals may recommend to the Superintendent that a student be prohibited from entering the school or school grounds (except for a prearranged conference with an administrator) until the end of a semester, the end of the current school year, including summer school, or permanently, dependent upon the severity of the offense. Expulsion requires Board of Education approval and may include loss of academic credit.
22. FAPE: Free Appropriate Public Education
23. FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1984
24. Harassment: A student shall not engage in conduct or repeatedly commit an act that alarms or seriously annoys another person and that serves no legitimate purpose.
25. IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
26. IEP: Individualized Educational Plan
27. Illegal Drugs: Any controlled prescribed or over the counter drug/medication not for the personal use of a prescribed person or any controlled or uncontrolled substance.
28. In-School Intervention: In-School Interventions emphasizes teaching students to behave in ways that contribute to academic achievement and school success and that support a school environment where students and school staff are responsible and respectful. In-school Interventions also emphasizes the need for school staff to promote appropriate behaviors and by teaching, modeling, reinforcing and monitoring appropriate behaviors and by treating

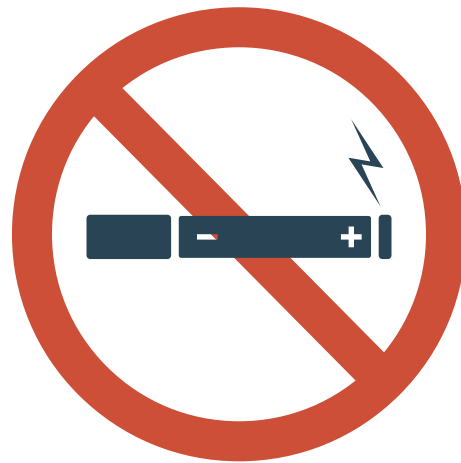
many minor misbehaviors as teaching moments rather than punishment opportunities. In-school Interventions recognizes that effective school discipline is anchored to meaningful corrective instruction and guidance that offers students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and contribute to the school community. In-School Interventions also involves ongoing monitoring of discipline data to ensure equitable school-based discipline practices are implemented in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.

29. Loco Parentis: A person standing in place of a parent.
30. Multiple Birth Sibling: A twin, triplet, quadruplet, or other sibling resulting from a multiple birth; and "parent" means the parent, legal guardian, or other person having custody or charge of a student enrolled in a public school.
31. Out Designated Area: Outside of specific or assigned area.
32. PED: Personal Electronic Device is: a cell/smartphone, smart watches, a computer, and any other device that is capable of transmitting, receiving, or recording messages, images, sounds, data, or other information by electronic means or that, in appearance, purpose to be a cell phone, computer, or such other device; a camera, regardless of whether it operates electronically, mechanically, or otherwise and regardless of whether images are recorded by using digital technology, film, light-sensitive plates, or other means; or any other device that can connect and transmit data through Bluetooth Technology. The school is not responsible for loss, damage, or theft of any electronic device, including cell phones brought to school or confiscated due to a violation of the policy.
33. Probation: The principal may suspend punishment for a rule violation and notify the parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and students in writing at the parent conference that the student must obey the rules for the remainder of the school year under penalty of recommendation for expulsion. Both the parent/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and student will be requested to sign the probation letter. (Must be documented by another employee if they refuse to sign.)
34. Reasonable Suspicion: Reasonable grounds for suspecting that a search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or school rules.
35. Rights and Responsibilities: Students, as well as parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and school personnel, are guaranteed full rights of citizenship by the United States Constitution, and those rights cannot be denied except through due process of law. In order for others to enjoy their citizenship rights, it is necessary for students to behave in such a way that others are treated equally and with respect.
36. RTI: Response to Intervention is a problem-solving approach that uses a 3-tier model of intervention based on an integrated system of assessment and data collection that informs instructional decisions and decisions for a behavior plan at each tier.
37. Rubric: A guide listing specific criteria for grading or scoring academic papers, projects, or tests.
38. School Board: PCSSD elected school board
39. Sexual Harassment/Misconduct: Sexual harassment is unwanted verbal, written or physical behavior of a sexual nature; physical intimidation and mockery or scorn. Sexual activity or sexual misconduct to include possession of or distribution of pornographic media.
40. Standards-Based Report Card: Provides detailed information on how well a child is progressing toward the mastery of standards in each subject area.

- 41. Student Assistance Center (SAC): Center for the assignment of secondary students in lieu of out-of- school suspensions.
- 42. Suspension: Prohibition of a student from entering the school or school grounds (except for a prearranged conference with an administrator) for a period of time set by the principal of the school or the superintendent. Suspensions normally will not be longer than 10 student contact days including the day on which the suspension is initially imposed.
- 43. TAC: Teacher Access Center
- 44. Tardy: A tardy is any time a student arrives after school begins or departs before the end of the school day. An early check out is a departure any time before the school day ends. If a student misses 2.5 hours of instruction it will be considered a half-day absence.
- 45. Uniformed services: The United States Army, United States Navy, United States Air Force, United States Marine Corps, United States Coast Guard, United States Space Force, United States National Guard, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Officer Corps, the United States Public Health Services Commissioned Corps, and the state and federal reserve components of each of these bodies.
- 46. Veteran: An individual who served in the uniformed services and who was discharged or released from the uniformed services under conditions other than dishonorable.



Bullying means the intentional harassment, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, defamation, or threat or incitement of violence by a student against another student or a school employee. Bullying may occur through written, verbal, electronic or physical act that causes or creates a clear and present danger of physical harm or damage to school or student property. Bullying is NOT ALLOWED and can get you in trouble, suspended, or expelled. If someone bullies you or you see someone being bullied, get help by telling an adult, Or by calling PCSSD Security at 501.234.2260. Bullying is prohibited by ACT 115 of 2007 and PCSSD Parent / Student Handbook for Student Conduct and Discipline.



In compliance with Act 1099, passed during 2013's regular legislative session, Pulaski County Special School District prohibits the use of e-cigarettes on all public school properties. In the act, e-cigarettes are defined as "electronic oral devices" which provide a vapor of nicotine or another substance used to simulate smoking. This restriction applies to all adults and all students.

Knives, weapons and handguns are not permitted on school property or on school buses.

If you should unintentionally take a knife (or other weapon) to school, turn it in to school officials voluntarily and immediately without fear of penalty. (Exceptions: guns)



PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

LEA: 6003000

Annual Financial Report (AFRB) Level I

Cycle: 1

County: PULASKI

2025 - 2026

Actual FY 2024 - 2025

Budget FY 2025 - 2026

FUND 1 - Teacher Salary

Beginning Balance	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Revenues	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Expenditures	\$69,997,770.22	\$68,590,118.40
Total Transfers	\$69,997,770.22	\$68,590,118.40

Ending Balance	\$0.00	\$0.00
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FUND 2 - Operating

Beginning Balance	\$15,591,099.76	\$15,336,402.50
Total Revenues	\$155,745,335.91	\$159,655,156.41
Total Expenditures	\$86,134,820.88	\$90,565,929.62
Total Transfers	-\$69,865,212.29	-\$68,387,506.95

Ending Balance	\$15,336,402.50	\$16,038,122.34
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FUND 3 - Building

Beginning Balance	\$57,126,839.53	\$34,147,521.01
Total Revenues	\$3,357,775.84	\$16,542,708.00
Total Expenditures	\$26,337,094.36	\$22,603,996.29
Total Transfers	\$0.00	\$0.00

Ending Balance	\$34,147,521.01	\$28,086,232.72
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FUND 4 - Debt Service

Beginning Balance	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Revenues	\$16,460,315.52	\$16,460,316.00
Total Expenditures	\$16,460,315.52	\$16,460,316.00
Total Transfers	\$0.00	\$0.00

Ending Balance	\$0.00	\$0.00
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PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

LEA: 6003000

Annual Financial Report (AFRB) Level I

Cycle: 1

County: PULASKI

2025 - 2026

Actual FY 2024 - 2025

Budget FY 2025 - 2026

FUND 5 - Capital Outlay

Beginning Balance	\$3,054,234.93	\$1,930,150.87
Total Revenues	\$3,895,468.97	\$3,486,226.00
Total Expenditures	\$5,019,553.03	\$4,586,904.16
Total Transfers	\$0.00	\$0.00

Ending Balance	\$1,930,150.87	\$829,472.71
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FUND 6 - Federal Grants

Beginning Balance	\$912,738.40	\$374,338.35
Total Revenues	\$11,376,289.14	\$14,006,310.22
Total Expenditures	\$11,914,689.19	\$14,113,539.85
Total Transfers	\$0.00	\$0.00

Ending Balance	\$374,338.35	\$267,108.72
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FUND 7 - Activity

Beginning Balance	\$962,123.81	\$990,162.75
Total Revenues	\$1,334,830.87	\$1,425,082.87
Total Expenditures	\$1,306,791.93	\$1,305,945.00
Total Transfers	\$0.00	\$0.00

Ending Balance	\$990,162.75	\$1,109,300.62
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FUND 8 - Food Service

Beginning Balance	\$2,237,850.81	\$1,700,050.96
Total Revenues	\$6,778,722.09	\$6,778,723.08
Total Expenditures	\$7,316,521.94	\$7,296,248.00
Total Transfers	\$0.00	\$0.00

Ending Balance	\$1,700,050.96	\$1,182,526.04
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Blackwell, Rachel <rblackwell@pcssd.org>

PCSSD Board has approved DRIVEN School of Opportunity Proposal

1 message

communication@pcssd.org <communication@pcssd.org>

Wed, Nov 12, 2025 at 8:06 AM

To: rblackwell@pcssd.org

The item you recommended, DRIVEN School of Opportunity Proposal , has been approved as submitted by the PCSSD Board. If you have further questions or require further confirmation, please contact Yolanda Richards at yrichards@pcssd.org.

Attachment: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Vh8hHok3yfxQnYshnW-7uyu6oqv60pma>

Charter School Office

Waiver Request Form

For Requests Submitted during the 2025 - 2026 School Year

Section 1: Administrative Data

District/ School/ Applicant Name	Pulaski County Special School District DRIVEN School of Opportunity
Superintendent/ Point Of Contact	Jeff Senn/Rachel Blackwell
Email Address	jsenn@pcssd.org/rblackwell@pcssd.org
Phone Number	501-366-4110
District/ School LEA (if assigned)	Pulaski County Special School District New LEA Requested
Date of Waiver Request Submission	12/2/2025

Section 2: Waiver Requests - Total of 1 Requests

Request # 1	Waiver Topic:		
	Arkansas Code Annotated:		
	Standard for Accreditation:	1-A.2	A high school unit of credit shall be awarded for a course that meets for a minimum of 120 clock hours unless the public school district awards units of credit based on subject matter competency in compliance with the public school district's approved plan under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-216. (S/P)
	DESE Rules Governing:	NA	
	Rationale:	Unit of Credit meets for 120 clock hours. Standard 1-A.2 With the flexible model DRIVEN School of Opportunity has used for the last seven years, we have found shorter class periods (25 minutes) with academic choice time available for students to work on concepts taught work best. Students have time to seek support from tutors and collaborate with other students. Although most of our students complete the assigned number of courses each year, some wish to accelerate and take more than the allotted number of courses. In DRIVEN School of Opportunity, we support this as long as the student, parent, and mentor agree. Weekly check-ins among students, parents, and mentors help keep this process on track to ensure success.	



Request # 2	Waiver Topic:		
	Arkansas Code Annotated:		
	Standard for Accreditation:		
	DESE Rules Governing:		
	Rationale:		

Request # 3	Waiver Topic:		
	Arkansas Code Annotated:		
	Standard for Accreditation:		
	DESE Rules Governing:		
	Rationale:		

Request # 4	Waiver Topic:		
	Arkansas Code Annotated:		
	Standard for Accreditation:		
	DESE Rules Governing:		
	Rationale:		

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUPERINTENDENT TO APPLY FOR A CONVERSION CHARTER
TO REFLECT CHANGES TO THE LAW CONCERNING SCHOOLS OF INNOVATION**

WHEREAS, at the March 14th, 2017 PCSSD School Board of Directors meeting, the School Board approved submitting the District's application to the Arkansas Department of Education to create "Schools of Innovation" at PCSSD branded as the *DRIVEN School of Opportunity*; and

WHEREAS, PCSSD currently operates a School of Innovation at Robinson High School; and

WHEREAS, the Arkansas Legislature repealed the Schools of Innovation laws (6-15-2801, et. seq.,) in Act 800 of 2025 in favor of modifying and enhancing the already existing District-managed "Conversion Charter" model; and

WHEREAS, the *DRIVEN School of Opportunity* should transition to a "Conversion Charter" to reflect this legal change; and

WHEREAS, the *DRIVEN School of Opportunity* should become a "Conversion Charter" to continue to grow, improve, and evolve;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PCSSD BOARD OF EDUCATION THAT

The PCSSD School Board authorizes its Superintendent to take all necessary steps to apply for a new Local Education Agency (LEA) and a District Conversion Charter for the *DRIVEN School of Opportunity* for the 2026-27 school year.

ADOPTED by majority vote of the Board on this 11th day of November, 2025.

By: _____

Stephen Delaney

Title: President

By: _____

Heather Smith

Title: Secretary