

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School

Faculty Handbook

2019-2020



Mrs. Ginger Almon
Principal

Mr. Eddie Owens
Assistant Principal

185 Pecan Street

Shellman, Georgia 39886

Phone: (229) 345-3033

Fax: (229) 679-2018

www.sowegastemcharter.org

Table of Contents

This handbook has been designed for the faculty and staff at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (SGSC). Purposeful planning was the guiding principle behind deciding what was best to include in this document. Suggestions for changes in policy and procedures are welcomed and will be given careful consideration by administration. All decisions will be made with a primary emphasis on what is best for the students.

I. INTRODUCTION

Board of Education

Organizational Chart

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School

Organizational Chart

Mission Statement

School Calendar

Faculty & Staff Assignments

II. SGSC EMPLOYEE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Hours of Duty

Parking

Leaves and Absences

Performance Appraisal

Meetings

Reporting Students' Absences

School Communications

Building Concerns

Purchases and Reimbursement

Safety

Professionalism and Confidentiality

III. STUDENT INFORMATION

School Records

Student Conduct

Academics

Curriculum and Instruction

Homework Policy

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Promotion/Retention Policy

Remediation

Testing

I.

INTRODUCTION

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter Board of Education

Board Members

Tony Lee, Chairman

tlee@sowegastemcharter.org

Chris Weathersby, Vice-Chairman

cweathersby@sowegastemcharter.org

Michelle Graham, Secretary

mgraham@sowegastemcharter.org

Lisa Jones, Voting Member

ljones@sowegastemcharter.org

Paul Langford, Ex-Officio

Tim Thompson, Ex-Officio

Interim Chief Financial Officer

Bill Cooling

Federal Programs Director

Kadie Phillips

School Nutrition Director and Data Coordinator

Nicole Horn

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School

185 Pecan Street
Shellman, Georgia 39886
229-345-3033

Principal
Ginger Almon

Interim Assistant Principal
Eddie Owens

Administrative Secretary
Deborah Richter

Special Education Director
Natalie Zajac

School Mission Statement

The mission of Southwest Georgia S.T.E.M. Charter School is to foster in its students the passion and curiosity to become life-long learners. Students will develop the ability and motivation to think independently, communicate effectively, and excel academically. Through an innovative curriculum, saturated in the sciences, technology, engineering, our students will become managers of their education. (time, resources, talents and environment)

To accomplish this mission, Southwest Georgia S.T.E.M. Charter will:

- utilize a standards-based interdisciplinary STEM curriculum
- emphasis hand-on, real-world approach
- utilize inquiry and project based learning
- emphasis how to think, not what to think
- provide a well-rounded curriculum
- develop and preserve in students the appreciation of their agriculture/forestry rich surroundings (Place-Based Education)
- develop partnerships with local and regional Ag/Forestry related parties
- maintain a positive relationship with parents and the community

The faculty and staff will serve as models, demonstrating strong intellectual, physical, social, and emotional skills of productive leaders and life-long learners.

Constructive criticism of the schools is welcomed by the Board whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to equip the schools to do their tasks more effectively.

Members of the Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Board of Education have confidence in the professional staff and desire to support their actions in order that they are free from unnecessary, spiteful, or negative criticism and complaint. This policy does not supersede any employee’s or citizen’s right to contact Board members directly. However, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will be referred to the administration for study and possible solution.

The Board advises the public that the proper channeling of and most effective way to resolve complaints involving instruction, discipline, transportation, or learning materials is as follows:

CHAIN-OF-COMMAND

Discipline	Curriculum	Transportation
Principal/Assistant Principal	Principal/Assistant Principal	Principal/Assistant Principal
School Board Member	School Board Member	Transportation Director
State Department of Education/State Charter Schools Commission	State Department of Education/State Charter Schools Commission	School Board Member
		State Department of Education/State Charter Schools Commission

The Board will consider hearing citizen complaints when they cannot be resolved by the administration. Persons desiring to communicate with the Board shall submit a written request to the Board Office Administrative Assistant stating their name, home address, the topic about which they

wish to speak and the group they represent, if applicable, no later than 12 o'clock on Wednesday prior to the scheduled Board meeting.

After reading such complaints, and if more information which might challenge or question the good name or character of an individual is needed, the Board shall consider this in Executive Session. The Board will not consider or act on complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate administrative level or if the appropriate chain of command has not been attempted.

2019-2020 Faculty and Staff Assignments

<p><u>Pre-K</u> Julie Jackson Mackenzie Knights</p>	<p><u>Gifted Coordinator</u> Cindy Carlson</p>
<p><u>Kindergarten</u> Alex Lovering Lyndsey Alston</p>	<p><u>Media Center</u> Leah Yurisich</p>
<p><u>1st Grade</u> Mary Martha Ivey Jordan Scarborough</p>	<p><u>Technology</u> Heather Page</p>
<p><u>2nd Grade</u> Toni Avera Taylor Moore</p>	<p><u>Paraprofessionals</u> Jessica Hunter Joyce Cooper Kayla Foxworth Linda Bruce Jill Lee Wanda Smith</p>
<p><u>3rd Grade</u> Connie Wilson Ashley Perryman</p>	
<p><u>4th Grade</u> Amy Greene Tabitha Sapp</p>	<p><u>Physical Education</u> Sandi Henson Christopher Rumble Bubba Redding</p>
<p><u>5th Grade</u> Michael Duke Kelly Gentry</p>	<p><u>Administrative Assistant</u> Deborah Richter</p>
<p><u>6th Grade</u> Tonya Germany Shawn Banks</p>	<p><u>Receptionist and Attendance Clerk</u> Amy Ferri</p>

<p><u>7th Grade</u> Jennifer Nelms Jala Cash</p>	<p><u>Cafeteria</u> Donna Key Loretta Weeks Mary Myers</p>
<p><u>8th Grade</u> Cindy Fincher Michelle Horn</p>	<p><u>STEM</u> Kimberly Moore</p>
<p><u>9th Grade</u> Teresa Banks</p>	<p><u>Board Office Administrative Assistants</u> Kadie Phillips Loretta Weeks</p>
<p><u>Special Education</u> Natalie Zajac - Director Katy Jackson Danielle VanHousen Kimberly Wilburn</p>	<p><u>Maintenance</u> Dewayne Cook</p>
<p><u>Early Intervention Program</u> Pat Wilkerson Xatavious Hardwick</p>	

II

EMPLOYEE DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

HOURS OF DUTY

The school day for all staff members is from 7:30 am until 3:30 pm. Employees will sign in and out each day using the Checkmate feature located within Infinite Campus. Failure to sign in/out each day utilizing the Infinite Campus portal may result in an absence being documented for the day. Permission must be obtained from the principal prior to signing out before 3:30 pm. The appropriate paperwork must be completed prior to leaving the building. Requests for personal days and absences due to doctor's appointments must be submitted at least 24 hours in advance. Follow-up forms after an absence must be submitted in a timely manner. LORETTA WEEKS INFORMATION:
229.938.8055

Teachers will greet their students at the door every morning. Students are not to be lined up in the hall waiting for teachers to let them in the classroom. Additionally, students are to be properly supervised at all times.

On the first day of school, teachers may receive parents in their classrooms. Please make sure that every child knows how he/she will get home.

MORNING AND AFTERNOON DUTY

Morning Duty - All Year		
All teachers with a homeroom class should be in their classrooms by 7:30 a.m. - at the door to welcome students		
Staff	Time	Location
Christopher Rumble	7:30 - 8:15	Car Rider Door- Open doors and welcome students
Ginger Almon	7:15 - 8:15	Bus Rider Door & Main Building

Jill Lee	7:30 - 8:15	Pre-K Building to get the Pre-K and K students
Danielle VanHousen	7:30 - 8:15	Wooden Walkway at the Mobile Units
Loretta Weeks	7:30 - 8:15	Lunchroom
Linda Bruce	7:15 - 8:15	Auditorium
Sandi Henson	7:30 - 8:10	Sidewalk outside of Pre-K/K Yellow Building
Kim Moore	7:30 - 8:10	Locker Area

Afternoon Duty - All Year		
Staff	Time	Location
Julie Jackson	2:55 - 3:10	Car Rider Line (calling students on radio/check car rider passes)
Alex Redding	2:55 - 3:10	Car Rider (inside building - getting rider info from Julie Jackson)
Mackenzie Knights	2:55 - 3:10	Cone Position # 1 (put students into cars)
Lyndsey Alston	2:55 - 3:10	Cone Position # 2 (put students into cars)
Kayla Foxworth	2:55 - 3:10	Cone Position # 3 (put students into cars)
Jessica Hunter	2:55 - 3:10	Cone Position # 4 (put students into cars)
Ashley Perryman	2:55 - 3:10	Inside Car Rider Monitor
Danielle VanHousen	2:55 - 3:10	Inside Car Rider Monitor
Tabitha Sapp	2:55 - 3:10	Inside Car Rider Monitor
Toni Avera	2:55 - 3:10	Inside Car Rider Monitor
Week 1: Katy Jackson Week 2: Taylor Moore Week 3: Tonya Germany Week 4: Xatavius Hardwick (rotate)	Late Bus Duty	Media Center (Pre-K - 2)
Week 1: Connie Wilson Week 2: Kelly Gentry Week 3: Michael Duke	Late Bus Duty	Computer Lab (Grades 3-5)

Week 4: Amy Greene (rotate)		
Week 1: Shawn Banks Week 2: Michelle Horn Week 3: Teresa Banks Week 4: Jennifer Nelms (rotate)	Late Bus Duty	Auditorium (Grades 6-9)
Ginger Almon	2:45 - 3:10	Monitor Buses
Cindy Fincher	After school	After School Detention

PARKING

Faculty and staff will park in the designated parking area, which includes the area next to the 1st and 2nd grade classrooms (between the building and board office). There is a designated area in front of the school for visitor parking.

LEAVES AND ABSENCES

All personnel, including principals, are expected to be present on the job at all times unless personal illness, death, family emergency, or other conditions approved by the leader of school necessitate their absence. The employee is responsible for reporting his/her illness or emergency and for requesting leave for other conditions to the principal. When an emergency absence is necessary please call or text Ms. Loretta Weeks or the principal.

Reminder: The school day for all staff members is from 7:30 AM until 3:30 PM.

All staff members - with the exception of hourly employees - begin the year with 3 personal days that may be used for personal reasons. Excessive personal leave days (more than three) will be deducted from the paycheck of the person requesting the personal leave days. Staff members accrue 1 ¼ days per month in sick leave - 12 ½ days for the year. These days may be used for appointments, sick time, sick children, etc.

When a professional staff member's absence from duty extends beyond the limits set by the state, Ms. Weeks will continue to be responsible for securing a qualified person to fill in during each absence. Salary for the teacher will be discontinued after the allotted 12 1/2 days. Substitutes will be paid through the office of the CFO. Pay will be adjusted on the basis of 1/190 of each day absent beyond the 12 1/2 days established by the State.

In accordance with the state law, a person may request up to three days of personal leave or professional leave. This request must be made in writing to the principal. Completing follow-up paperwork is the employee's responsibility. Having to constantly remind employees to submit paperwork will reflect negatively on annual evaluations.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter is committed to performance assessment that encourages continuous quality improvement for all employees. All personnel shall have their performance evaluated annually as required by Georgia Code 20-2-210. Certified educators are assessed under state evaluation programs and/or locally developed evaluation programs. (See TKES Standards in Appendix). At-will employees are assessed using locally developed evaluation programs.

The Act of The General Assembly of 1992, O.C.G.A. §2-2-989.5 et seq. mandates that Georgia local Board of Education ensure that certified personnel have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible and proceed to the next level as needed. (See Board policy for further explanation)

LESSON PLANS

Folders will be set up in Google Drive for your lesson plans so that administration and cooperating teachers will have access to them. The school approved lesson plan template must be utilized. Lesson plans for ALL subject areas are due on Friday of each week for the upcoming week. Hard copies of lesson plans must also be kept in a visible binder in the classroom.

Substitute Lesson Plans

When a teacher is absent from school, specific lesson plans for the day must be left on the teacher's desk and clearly labeled. Emergency lesson plans should be included in the daily lesson plan notebook. The plan should be updated frequently and should include:

- Key for the room
- Duty Information
- Extra assignments/worksheets
- Roster with a seating chart for each class
- General Class Procedures & Time Structure
- Daily Schedule

Disciplinary Form
Lesson plan
Weather/Fire Alarm Instructions
Emergency lesson plan
Hall Passes
Special Instructions for Students w/Health Issues

MEETINGS

All teachers are expected to attend scheduled meetings unless they are prohibited from doing so by some cause beyond their control. Promptness is essential to the success of all meetings. Meetings and conferences will be scheduled in the afternoon when feasible, and at least a two day notice will be given when possible. Requests to be excused from a meeting must be submitted to the principal. Personnel should plan appointments and responsibilities for days other than these prescribed dates.

Scheduled Meetings

Collaboration is essential to improving student learning. The mandate for meeting should not be viewed to satisfy a request by the building principal but an opportunity to discuss improvements among grade level teams.

Faculty Meetings will be held on the 4th Thursday of each month immediately after student dismissal.

Professional Learning Community Meetings (PLC) Meetings will be held based on a schedule decided by the principal based on conversations with the teachers. Once the schedule is confirmed, the principal will send a copy to all teachers. PLC meetings must occur at least once per month.

School Leadership Team (SLT) will meet quarterly. Dates will be decided based upon conversations with the teachers.

REPORTING STUDENTS' ABSENCES

Classroom attendance should be entered in Infinite Campus by no later than 8:30 am each day by the teacher. If for some reason, technology is not working a paper copy of attendance should be sent to the front office. The school secretary will change the report for tardy students. Excuses for absences should be forwarded to the front office.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

1. E-mails/Announcements/Postings: Consult your email at least daily for announcements and other items of interest. Other announcements will be made verbally and in writing as needed. Our school website and Google calendar are also excellent sources of information.

2. Out-of-School Communications and Discipline Referrals: Notices from Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School are very important in creating a positive image. Correspondence which contains errors, is poorly worded, or is illegibly written creates poor public relations. This is a matter which requires serious and constant attention. Have a colleague proof-read your communication before sending to parents. Any correspondence on official school letterhead must have the approval of the principal.

3. School-wide Communication: Any correspondence, to include school newsletters, school fundraisers, notices from the Department of Education, registration information, etc., will go out to our students in a timely manner. Another means of communication between home and school is the automated notification system used to inform parents of important messages from the school. Encourage parents to ensure that the school has current contact numbers so that they will be well-informed about student activities.

4. Parent Meetings: Because of the instructional demands placed on the administration and faculty, parents will be encouraged to schedule appointments to discuss any student or school concerns.

BUILDING CONCERNS

Each classroom teacher is responsible for making sure that air conditioning units are set to 78 every day before leaving. Computers need to be completely shut down for breaks that extend beyond 2 days. Maintenance and technology requests will be submitted via Google Forms in a link that will be sent out at the start of school.

PURCHASES AND REIMBURSEMENT

Any time employees purchase goods or services for the school and expect a reimbursement, they are required to gain prior approval from the principal. The principal will complete a Purchase Order to be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer for the reimbursement or to purchase the needed items. Directors for Special Education, Nutrition, and Gifted will complete their own Purchase Orders to be signed by the principal. Once the principal signs the Purchase Order, the Directors may submit an order for their items identified on the Purchase Order.

SAFETY

Employees will be aware of emergency procedures in the event of fire, tornado, or other events listed in the safety plan distributed at the beginning of the year. Each classroom will be equipped with a framed map of each building that showcases the exit plans for evacuation. Each teacher will ensure that the emergency kit in the classroom is current with updated rosters and equipment.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

Purpose

To provide knowledge to employees/clients/families/other individuals on infectious/ communicable diseases that arise in the community, which could threaten their health and safety and to give direction on how to effectively and efficiently control them.

Policy

Southwest Georgia S.T.E.M. Charter is committed to ensuring the safety of its employees/students/families/other individuals, by establishing procedures for responding to the infectious/communicable diseases and for protecting the privacy of infected persons, in accordance with the requirements of the Georgia Board of Education rule 160-1-3-.03.

Definitions

1. Infectious Diseases

An infectious disease is an illness caused by a specific infectious agent or its toxic produces, which can be passed on from one individual to another. It may be transmitted directly from one body to another, without the help of other objects such kissing, droplet spray from sneezing, coughing, spitting, singing or talking. It may be passed indirectly when an object transmits the organism. Objects of transmission could be utensils, food, water, milk, clothing, linens, air, soil or insects.

They include, but are not limited to:

- Malaria Chicken Pox
- Strep Throat Conjunctivitis
- Influenza (the flu) Hepatitis (A, B, C)
- HIV/Aids Lice
- Measles Ringworm
- Mumps Scabies
- Rubella Scarlet Fever
- SARS Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Tuberculosis Yeast Infections
- Common Cold

Procedures

1. Employees, who become aware of an infectious/communicable disease, shall:
 - a. report any confirmed occurrences of infectious diseases to the leader of the school;
 - b. follow the policies and procedures for infection control; and,
 - c. take recommended training or refresher training for infection control, if needed.
2. Upon becoming aware of the infectious/communicable disease, the principal shall:
 - a. Send the infected person to the nursing facility located on school grounds.
 - b. follow all medical advice from the appropriate health authority;

- c. advise employees about its existence; and, review measures for dealing with it;
 - d. remind employees about the infectious/communicable disease policy including:
 - i. an overview of the policy; and,
 - ii. the location of the written policy.
 - e. provide general information and infections control measures to teachers/families; and,
 - f. ensure that infection control practices are followed.
3. Should exposure to a blood-borne disease occur, leader of the school and employees shall follow the procedures outlined in *Reporting and Recording Exposure to Blood-borne Diseases*.
 4. The leader of the school shall ensure a “*Post Exposure Incident Report for Blood-borne Diseases*” is completed for any employee whose eye(s), mouth, other mucous membrane or no intact skin has come in contact with blood, a potentially infectious material(s) or needle/sharp object(s) while performing his/her duties.
 5. The leader of the school and employees shall respect the privacy rights of individuals who have contacted an infectious/communicable disease.
 6. The leader of the school and employees shall not discriminate against individuals who have contracted an infectious/communicable disease or who have positive antibodies to a blood-borne disease.

Guidelines

1. The leader of the school is responsible for ensuring the policy is followed.
2. Employees shall be given information on infectious/communicable diseases and their control measures.
3. Employees shall receive training on infectious/contagious diseases upon initial assignment and annually thereafter.
4. Training for infectious/contagious diseases shall include:
 - a. what infectious/contagious diseases are, how they are contacted, how they are transmitted and how they are controlled;
 - b. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards;
 - c. Universal Precautions
 - d. employer’s policies and procedures;
 - e. employer’s exposure control plan;
 - f. personal protective equipment;
 - g. engineering and work practice controls.
5. Training records shall include:
 - a. dates when training was given;
 - b. summary on what training was given;
 - c. names and credentials of person(s) providing the training; and,
 - d. names and positions of people attending the training sessions.

6. Records are to be maintained for 3 years from the date of training.
7. Students/families/other individuals who have/been exposed to infectious/contagious diseases shall be given basic information including what infectious/contagious diseases are, how they are contacted, how they are transmitted and how they are controlled.
8. Each LEA shall limit the disclosure of health-related information of its employees and students. FERPA prohibits the unauthorized disclosure of information from educational records except in certain limited circumstances, such as a health and safety emergency as described in 34 C.F.R. §§ 99.31(a) (10) and 99.36. Additionally, the disclosure of certain confidential health information may be a misdemeanor punishable under O.C.G.A. § 24-9-47.

PROFESSIONALISM & CONFIDENTIALITY

Dress Code - As professionals, teachers, and administrators are expected to dress appropriately for their duties, to adhere to the standards and expectations of their profession and to conduct themselves in a proper manner with their colleagues, parents, and all others.

Educators must particularly remember at all times that we are not just instructors of specific skills, but more importantly, we are role models for our students as well as important members of the community. The educator's demeanor and personal appearance strongly influences setting the tone in the classrooms and within the school. The teachers' dress is expected to be more modest than the students. If you question an item's appropriateness for school, it is probably better not to wear it.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School faculty should wear modest clothing associated with our status as professionals tempered with common sense toward a comfortable work day. Jeans are allowed each day.

Cell Phone Use

The use of a personal cell phone by teachers and staff in the presence of students for accessing social media sites, playing games, chatting, or texting will not be prohibited. Instructional time should be used for instruction. Emergencies are understood.

Employee's Children On Campus

The children of faculty and staff are permitted to stay with their parents at school during teacher work days. If on campus during after-school hours, they must remain in the presence of their parents or an adult designee at all times.

Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of each and every employee in our system to keep any information regarding a student confidential. Discussing the grades, behavior, or general personality traits of an individual child must be limited to the parents (or legal guardian), other teachers with a "need to know" and the

administration of the school. Those discussions must be made in proper places at proper times. You never know who may be listening to your conversations. (for Student Privacy and FERPA).

Workplace Gossip

Different problems arise because of gossip in the workplace. Workplace gossip is unethical according to the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators and has no place in the school where children should be the focus and look to us as role models for appropriate behavior. Some examples of the harmful consequences of gossip are: lost productivity and wasted time, morale and trust are eroded, feelings and reputations are hurt, good employees may leave due to an unhealthy atmosphere. When you are tempted to participate in rumors or gossip, ask yourself these questions:

- Is what I am about to say true?
- Is it harmless?
- Is it necessary?
- How would I feel if someone said something similar about me?
- How would I feel if I saw my words quoted in the daily paper tomorrow?
- How am I going to feel later if I say or listen to this?
- Does gossiping honor my own personal values?

Concerns that affect that school should be brought to the attention of administration immediately and not allowed to fester into a situation that brings about bad public relations. Workplace gossip will not be tolerated and could result in a write up placed in the teacher's folder and negative scores related to TKES evaluations (professionalism).

Social Media

The Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School asks that all school personnel and staff refrain from the use of social media during the school day. Use includes, but is not limited to: accessing, browsing, commenting, contacting, liking, and uploading. Social media includes, but is not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, & Twitter. In addition, school personnel and staff that use social media to post direct or indirect negativity about the school or other personnel and staff at the school will be violating ethical standards. These actions may result in a write placed in the teacher's folder and negative scores related to TKES evaluations (professionalism).

Building a Positive School Climate & Culture

The same diversity that will make us successful will also help create friction if we allow it. We cannot expect to work nearly 1600 hours together without any friction from time to time. Working together for the good of the school is our goal! Personal differences should be handled individually if possible.

It is extremely important to demonstrate to the students our commitment to not only education but a camaraderie which enhances the atmosphere in the workplace and encourages a positive climate in our school. In the event you cannot settle your differences, please follow the chain of command in this manual for all grievances.

III. STUDENT INFORMATION

SCHOOL RECORDS

Registration Packets - Registration packets will be completed for any new students. Please submit any new documentation pertaining to student information to the front office. This information will be updated in Infinite Campus by school administrators.

School Documents

Treat all school documents (admit slips, roll books, discipline referrals, attendance and absentee sheets, report cards, etc.) as confidential. At no time should these be accessible to students. Remember to turn your computer off when you are not available to supervise.

Cumulative Folders

Students' cumulative records are to be signed out upon removing them from the front office and signed back in upon returning them.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Tips on establishing preventive discipline:

- Lessons should be carefully planned. Boredom is a potent enemy of good discipline.
- Be certain you have everyone's attention before starting the lesson.
- The teacher's voice is a most effective instrument in the classroom. Avoid the two extremes of speaking too softly or too loudly; both may be ineffective.
- Enlist as many students as possible in the lesson. When students are actively involved in learning, they are less likely to cause problems.
- Use students' names often and create an expectation in students that they may be called on at any time.
- Plan questions that accommodate all ability levels in the class.
- When using the board, be sure the class is in full view and that all students can see the board.
- Move around the room often, casually, and naturally. Movements should be planned. Proximity control is a powerful tool when trying to eliminate off-task behavior such as talking or not paying attention.
- Appeal to the student's ego. Praise students publicly.

- A teacher who gives the impression of knowing how to handle problems without writing every small problem on a discipline referral will be in control and will earn the respect of students. Teacher-imposed consequences and consistency are much more effective in retaining respect and control rather than those imposed by an administrator.
- Do not use threats or sarcasm. A smile and a good sense of humor go a long way.
- Avoid making an issue of a student's behavior publicly. Talk with the student privately.

PRIOR TO WRITING A REFERRAL, YOU SHOULD:

- Contact the parents. Generally, contact through a telephone call will help; otherwise, have the parents come to school to have a face-to-face conference with you and the student.
- Get all the information that is available about the pupil. Make use of the guidance files.
- Privately inform the student he has a choice of either acceptable conduct or referral.
- Should unacceptable conduct persist and you feel you have been consistent with following the behavior plan, fill out a discipline referral form and issue it to the appropriate administrative office.
- Measures available to the administration are:
 1. Continued investigation
 2. After school detention
 3. Behavior contract
 4. Out-of-school suspension (OSS)
 5. Repayment of damages by student
 6. Referral to legal authorities
 7. Conference with parents, student, teacher, and/or administration

Teachers' classroom management procedures will be monitored to determine if there is a problem with implementation and consistency. Before an initial referral is made, teachers need to take ownership of improvements needed in their plan. Once a student has been referred to the office, you have deferred decision-making to an administrator. The discipline of that student will be at the discretion of the administration.

- Do not make threats that you as a teacher cannot carry out. Never tell a student what an administrator will do to him/her.
- Administrators are the only ones who have the authority to suspend students from classes. (HB605 modifications will be implemented).

It is important that we are respectful of students in our disciplinary responses. Consequences should focus on teaching, remediation, or logical consequences as much as possible. In providing consequences we also want to be mindful of the instructional time students are missing with the goal of minimizing the amount of instructional time missed.

<p style="text-align: center;">Level 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Minor Offenses</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Classroom Managed Behavior</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Major Offenses</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Office Managed</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Illegal Offenses</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Office Managed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Running in the hallway ● Loud voices/yelling ● Off-task behavior ● Noise making ● Class Disruption ● Failure to complete assignments and/or bring materials to class ● Out of Seat ● Horseplay ● Breaking cafeteria rules ● Breaking playground rules ● Inappropriate behavior in the bathrooms ● Distracting paraphernalia (games, phones, tablets, etc.) ● Chewing gum or eating candy except by teacher permission ● Violation of Dress Code ● Any other acts or violations which the Principal or Designee deem reasonable to fall in this category 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Major verbal altercation/major disruption ● Fighting/physical aggression ● Harassment/bullying ● Persistent/Willful Disobedience ● Insubordination ● Leaving class/campus without permission ● Property destruction/misuse ● Theft ● Forgery ● Unauthorized use of electronic devices/Internet misuse/cyberbullying ● Trespassing ● Offensive Touching ● Disorderly conduct ● Cheating ● Any other acts or violations which the Principal or Designee deem reasonable to fall in this category 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assault/Battery ● Use or possession of alcohol' under the influence of while on campus or a school sponsored event ● Weapons (possess, use or transmit) ● Threatening staff ● Bullying students ● Use or possession of drugs; under the influence of while on campus or a school sponsored event ● Terroristic Threats (staff/students) ● Arson ● Threatening to destroy school property (bomb, fire, shootings) ● Extreme property damage/vandalism ● Any other acts or violations which the Principal or Designee deem reasonable to fall in this category

CONSEQUENCES

Level 1 Minor Offenses Classroom Managed Behavior	Level 2 Major Offenses Office Managed	Level 3 Illegal Offenses Office Managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1st Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Teacher warning Ø Parental contact · 2nd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Teacher warning Ø Parent conference · 3rd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Administrative referral Ø Invitation for parent/guardian to accompany student to school or classes · Successive offenses may result in after school detention or out of school suspension (OSS) as assigned by administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1st Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Administrative Discretion Ø Parental contact · 2nd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø After school detention Ø Parent conference · 3rd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø After school detention (2 Days) Ø Behavior contract implementation Ø Invitation for parent/guardian to accompany student to school or classes Ø Successive offenses may result in out of school suspension (OSS) as assigned by administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1st Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Out of school suspension (3 - 5 days) Ø Parent conference Ø Student behavior contract · 2nd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø OSS (5 days) Ø Parent conference Ø Follow-up of behavior contract · 3rd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø OSS (7 days) Ø Parent conference Ø Possible tribunal · All Level 3 violations are zero tolerance offenses. Successive offenses may also result in expulsion

The principal will be the final say in the decisions related to identified behaviors. The chart above is meant to serve as a guide for educators and administrators - these are not the exact consequences for each violation. Decisions are subject to administration.

STUDENT ALLEGATIONS

OCGA 20-2-751.7(a) Education; alleged inappropriate behavior by teacher or school personnel; provisions: Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school. Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Board of Director's Chairman or designee. Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to child welfare agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney. Reports of acts sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the Board of Directors and Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

Bill Summary From the State: This bill addresses falsified reports of inappropriate behavior of educators toward students, establishes a complaint procedure, requires notice of the procedure in

teacher and student handbooks, provides for statements to the media, and provides penalties for students who falsify reports.

Requirements:

- Student codes of conduct must add falsifying, omitting or erroneously reporting information regarding alleged inappropriate behavior of school personnel toward a student.
- PSC must establish a state-mandated process for students to report such claims; the process must reserve the right of the students to report to law enforcement, and the bill requires publishing the process in teacher and student handbooks.
- If the report is deemed unsubstantiated, the LEA shall, at the request of the employee, submit a written statement to that effect to the media outlets that previously reported the claim.
- A student over 10 years old who falsely reports with malice can be punished by:
 - o Court ordered community service, or any other court sanction;
 - o Suspension or expulsion from the school system; or both court and school penalties

ACADEMICS

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Instruction is the most important aspect of each day at school. Comprehensive instruction coupled with effective classroom management provides your child with an optimum learning environment. Georgia's Standards of Excellence serve as the basis for all instructional planning.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework provides students with the opportunity to apply the information they have learned and develop independence. Meaningful and quality homework is limited to 30 minutes per night. However, students are encouraged to pursue non-assigned, independent leisure reading.

REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Mid-term progress reports are sent home every 4-1/2 weeks and report cards are sent home after each 9 week grading period. Students receive an evaluation of their achievement and general conduct. Please be prepared to discuss the progress reports/report card if necessary. Also, parents may call the main office if they need to set up a conference with any one or all of their child's teachers. **Outstanding debts or non-payment of debts may result in report cards being withheld until all debts are settled.**

The following criteria are used in determining grades:

1st – 9th Grades

A

90-100

B

80-89

C

70-79

F

Below 70

EXPECTATIONS FOR GRADING

Teachers are expected to score a variety of assessments (formative and summative) to gauge students' levels of understanding. Please adhere to the following when considering an ample amount of grades for the students that you are teaching - **Each subject must have at least 6 grades entered into Infinite Campus before Progress Reports are sent home for a total of 12 grades per 9 weeks report cards.**

1st - 8th Grade: 50% Summative Assessments and 50% Formative Assessments

9th Grade: 40% Summative Assessments, 40% Formative Assessments, and 20% EOCT

PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY

The following local promotion criteria will be used for the 2019 - 2020 school year. Students in grades 1-8 must pass the following requirements in addition to any state requirements:

While there are four subject areas - Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies. There is a Promotion & Retention (P&R) Committee led by the Principal to make decisions about the retention and placement status of named students.

Kindergarten

In order to be **promoted** to the next grade level, kindergarten students must demonstrate mastery of the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory Developing Skills (GKIDS) for language arts and math as well as all other kindergarten assessments. Other assessments, such as STAR Early Literacy and DIBELS will be used to guide decision making. In addition, the student must meet all attendance requirements as specified by Sowega STEM Charter School.

Grades 1st - 8th

In order to be **promoted** to the next grade level, students in grades 1st - 5th must pass at least three of the Core Subject Areas with a cumulative grade of 70% or better. This would result in the student passing at least three of the four subject areas for the year. In addition, students must meet all attendance requirements as specified by Sowega STEM Charter School.

If a student is **retained** in the current grade level, he/she will have failed at least two (or more) of the four Core Subject Areas and/or failed a mandatory Georgia Milestones Assessment core content area. This decision will be reviewed and agreed upon by the Promotion & Retention Committee.

If a student is **placed** into the next grade level, he/she will have failed at least two (or more) subject areas, but there are factors that would exclude the student from being retained. This decision will be reviewed and agreed upon by the Promotion & Retention Committee.

Students may be promoted upon recommendation of their teacher(s) after careful consideration of all the available records and available test scores. Retention is considered the last alternative after all other avenues have been attempted. Students who are in jeopardy of being retained will be immediately referred to the Student Support Team. Per State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.11, school level promotion and retention decisions shall be final and not subject to further appeal.

Georgia law requires students in grades 3, 5, and 8 to receive a reading determination of Grade Level or Above on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment in the area of reading and to attain an achievement level of “Developing Learner”, “Proficient Learner”, or “Distinguished Learner” on the mathematics section of the Georgia Milestones End-of Grade Assessment in mathematics for grades 5 and 8 in order to be promoted to the next grade level.

No third grade students shall be promoted to the fourth grade if the student does not achieve a status of grade level on the state-adopted assessment in reading and meet the promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education for the school that the student attends, in compliance with the Georgia Promotion, Placement, and Retention law (O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-282 through 20-2-285) and State Board of Education Rule (160-4-2-.11).

No fifth grade student shall be promoted to the sixth grade if the student does not achieve a status of grade level on the state-adopted assessments in reading and mathematics and meet promotion standards and criteria established by the leader of the school for the school that the student attends.

No eighth grade student shall be promoted to the ninth grade if the student does not achieve a status of grade level on the state-adopted assessments in reading and mathematics and meet promotion standards and criteria established by the leader of the school for the school that the student attends.

High School - 9th - 12th Grade

State-required areas of study	
To graduate, Georgia students must earn a minimum of 23 credits (also called units) in the following areas of study:	
Required Area of Study	Credit/ Unit
Language Arts	4
Mathematics	4
Science (3 required and 1 elective)	4
Social Studies	3
Modern/Classical Language and/or Technical Education and/or Fine Arts	3
Health and Physical Education	1
Electives	4

REMEDICATION

Remediation will be available to students that have been determined to need remedial help in reading and/or mathematics. Students qualify based on test scores and daily academic performance.

TESTING

The State Department of Education requires standardized testing at certain grades. Students here also receive additional testing. You will be notified well in advance of test dates so that you can prepare for testing.

- **The Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)** provides diagnostic information about kindergarten students’ developing skills in language arts, math, science, social studies, social/emotional development, and approaches to learning.

- **Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)** is a formative literacy assessment designed to assess the acquisition of a set of K-6 literacy skills, such as phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It will be administered to K – 3rd grade students.

- **The Georgia Milestones** is a comprehensive summative assessment which measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. It is administered to 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.

- **End of Course Testing** Improved teaching and learning are the main focus of Georgia’s education system. The EOCT align with Georgia’s state mandated content standards and include assessment of specific content knowledge and skills. The assessments provide diagnostic information to help students identify strengths and areas of need in learning, therefore improving performance in all high school courses. The EOCT also provide data to evaluate the effectiveness of classroom instruction at the school, system and state levels. In 2011 – 2012, the EOCT became Georgia’s high school accountability assessment as part of the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI).

- **Benchmark Assessments** are designed to measure student progress in Pre-K through 9th grade and will be administered as pre-assessments at the beginning of the school year, at mid-year, and post-assessments at the end.

- The **STAR assessments** are used to screen students for their reading and math achievement levels. **STAR Reading** and **STAR Math** assessments help determine reading and math achievement levels in order to place students into the Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math programs. **STAR Early Literacy** assessments help educators monitor students’ growing literacy skills and students’ progress toward becoming independent readers. STAR assessments are also used to monitor student growth throughout the year, to estimate students’ understanding of state standards, and predict students’ performance on the Georgia Milestones Assessment. In addition, STAR also helps teachers determine appropriate instructional levels and skills that students are ready to learn.

- **DIBELS** - (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is a series of short tests that assess early childhood (grades K-3) literacy. It is a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of a set of K-6 literacy skills, such as phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

- **USA TestPrep** is utilized to monitor the student growth of 3rd-9th graders throughout the year in the content areas of Math, Science and Social Studies.