

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
AND EMPLOYMENT**DATE: July 24, 2007

---

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ASSURANCES**

It is the policy of the Columbia County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, handicap, religion, or national origin in the educational programs and the activities, or admissions to facilities operated by the Columbia County School System, or in the employment practices of the Columbia County Board of Education. The Columbia County School System shall comply with all aspects of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Amended, 1974), Age Discrimination Act of 1967, Americans With Disabilities Act of 1992, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

To ensure compliance with this equal opportunity policy, the Superintendent of Schools shall designate staff members to:

- a. Coordinate efforts of the Department to comply with this policy;
- b. Develop and ensure the maintenance of a filing system to keep all records required under this policy;
- c. Investigate any complaints of violations of this policy;
- d. Administer a grievance procedure for employees, students and/or parents of students enrolled in the Columbia County School System, or community members who reside in Columbia County.

The Superintendent of Schools has appointed the following staff members to coordinate all aspects of compliance with the indicated acts:

Associate Superintendent  
of Student Learning  
Columbia County Board of Education  
**4781 Hereford Farm Road**  
**Evans, GA 30809**  
(706) 541-2723

Title VI of the Civil  
Rights Act of 1964  
(Amended 1974)  
Title VII of the Civil  
Rights Act 1964  
(Amended 1974)

**Deputy Superintendent**  
  
Columbia County Board of Education  
**4781 Hereford Farm Road**  
**Evans, GA 30809**  
(706) 541-2723

Title IX of the  
Education Amendments  
of 1972  
(Interscholastic  
Athletics/Equity)  
Section 504 of the  
Rehabilitation Act of  
1973

Executive Director of Human Resources  
Human Resources Department  
**4781 Hereford Farm Road**  
**Evans, GA 30809**  
(706) 541-2723

Title IX of the  
Education Amendments  
of 1972  
Age Discrimination Act  
of 1967

Director of Special Services  
Department of Special Services  
**4781 Hereford Farm Road**  
**Evans, GA 30809**  
(706) 541-2723

Americans with  
Disabilities Act of  
1992

Any student enrolled in the Columbia County School System, parent of a child enrolled in the Columbia County School System, employee of the Columbia County Board of Education, or resident of Columbia County who believes the school system has violated any aspect of the laws governing equal opportunity is encouraged to file a complaint identifying the policy, act or practice deemed to be in violation.

The grievance procedure for filing such complaints shall be as follows, with the exception of charges of sexual harassment which shall follow the grievance procedures outlined in Policy GAEB/JCAC Prohibition of Sexual Harassment. The compliance officer or the building administrator shall assist the complainant in filing a complaint through the proper channels.

1. The student, parent, employee or community member with a complaint shall submit a written statement to the appropriate compliance officer describing the practice or action believed to be prohibited by the provisions of law.
2. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the compliance officer shall investigate the allegation to determine if the district is in noncompliance within 14 calendar days from the date of receipt of the written complaint.
3. A preliminary report of findings will be issued to the complainant within five days of completion of the investigation.
4. When violations are found to exist, the compliance officer shall confer with the appropriate school personnel to determine the most appropriate course of action to correct the situation. Such action will then be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools for approval within 30 calendar days from the date of receipt of the written complaint.
5. Upon securing the Superintendent's approval, the compliance officer shall supervise the administration of the new procedures and communicate the final resolution of the complaint to the person who initiated the complaint no later than 60 calendar days from the date of receipt of the written complaint.

6. Should the compliance officer fail to agree that a violation exists; the complainant has the right to appeal to the Superintendent of Schools within ten days after receiving the final decision of the compliance officer. The Superintendent of Schools will review the evidence compiled during the investigation and render a written decision to the complainant within ten days from the date the letter of appeal was received. Should the Superintendent of Schools fail to agree, the complainant has the right to appeal to the Columbia County Board of Education within ten days after receiving the final decision of the Superintendent of Schools. The Columbia County Board of Education shall consider the evidence and documentation collected during the investigation and shall render a decision in writing to the complainant within 30 calendar days from the date the letter of appeal was received.
7. Should the Columbia County Board of Education fail to agree, the complainant may appeal to the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The Superintendent of Schools shall also provide for the publication of this policy and/or grievance procedure in publications of the Board of Education. Such publications should include the name, office address, and telephone number of the compliance officers designated pursuant to this policy.

#### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT**

The Columbia County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, handicap, religion or national origin in the employment practices of the Columbia County School System. It is the expressed intention of the Columbia County Board of Education to hire the most highly qualified candidate for each position. It is the responsibility of the administrator who makes a recommendation for employment to adhere to the system employment procedures and to guarantee equal employment.

The administrator responsible for hiring is accountable for assuring a culturally diverse and highly qualified staff to establish high expectations and attain student achievement at the highest possible levels.

#### **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

Effective on the 1st day of July, 2000, all applicants of the Columbia County Board of Education who are selected for employment shall be fingerprinted and have criminal record checks through the Georgia Crime Information Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The applicant selected for employment will be required to complete a consent form authorizing the Columbia County Sheriff's Department to conduct the criminal history check. Effective on the 1st day of July, 1994, pursuant to OCGA 20-2-211, all new certificated professional personnel to be issued a contract of employment shall be fingerprinted and have criminal record checks through

the Georgia Crime Information Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

As required by the A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000, all current employees of the Columbia County Board of Education must have a criminal history background check conducted every five years. For employees previously not fingerprinted upon initial employment with the Columbia County Board of Education, the first criminal records check will include FBI and GBI fingerprinting as well. For certified employees, the criminal history background check will be conducted during the year that the required teaching **or paraprofessional** certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission must be renewed. For all other employees, to include auxiliary employees, professional employees not required to hold a teaching certificate, teachers who hold National Board for Professional Teaching Standards teacher certification, or teachers who hold life certificates, a criminal history check must be conducted every five years during the month of initial employment.

The Columbia County Sheriff's Department will fingerprint prospective employees, and the Board of Education shall bear the cost of the FBI fee for the record check. The Columbia County Board of Education will authorize the issuance of a temporary contract of employment for required certified employees not to exceed 200 days to allow for the receipt of the results of the criminal record check. Upon receipt of an acceptable criminal history report, the Columbia County Board of Education will issue the standard one-year contract of employment. If an adverse employment decision is made based on the results of the criminal history, the employee will be notified in writing and will be afforded the right to a public hearing before the Columbia County Board of Education.

The Columbia County Board of Education reserves the right to conduct background checks on any employee upon receiving a written complaint signed by any complaining party concerning any employee of the system. These written complaints shall be kept confidential as required by law. The Columbia County Board of Education reserves the right to check, without receiving a written complaint, if sufficient cause is given to justify a criminal record's check of any employee. All requirements of the law dealing with criminal GCIC checks shall be met by all employees of the system should it be deemed necessary to complete a background check pursuant to OCGA 49-5-110, et seq. A background check shall include, but not **be** limited to the following:

- a) OCGA 16-5-23 relating to simple battery when the victim is a minor;
- b) OCGA 16-5-24 relating to aggravated battery when the victim is a minor;
- c) OCGA 16-5-70 relating to cruelty to children;

- d) OCGA 16-12-1 relating to contributing to the delinquency of a minor;
- e) Any crime relating to Chapter 6 of Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia relating to sexual offenses;
- f) Any crime relating to Chapter 13 of Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia relating to controlled substances, marijuana, dangerous drugs and alcohol;
- g) OCGA 16-5-1 relating to murder or felony murder;
- h) OCGA 16-4-1 relating to criminal attempt if it concerns a minor;
- i) OCGA 16-8-1 relating to theft;
- j) Any other offenses committed in any other jurisdiction either state or federal which if committed in this state would be deemed to be one of the enumerated crimes listed herein;
- k) Any other acts which could be reasonably construed as hindering the ability of an applicant to supervise children.

**PROCEDURE: YES**

**ADOPTED: 2/24/98**

**REVISED: 1/12/99, 8/10/99, 8/8/00,12/12/00,7/8/03, 8/10/04,  
12/12/06**

**Columbia County Board of Education**