

GCS Information Ambassador Newsletter



June 14, 2023

Board of Education Approves Policies

The Guilford County Schools Board of Education voted to approve several revised policies relating to Student Accountability Standards, Credit Recovery and Graduation requirements at Tuesday's board meeting.

The revised Student Accountability Standards [Policy 3420](#) directs the superintendent to develop administrative regulations that outline promotion standards, the process teachers and administrators use to determine a student's readiness to progress to the next level, and required intervention supports and family engagement steps to meet the needs of students who are not on track to meet promotion standards. This policy update also merges with the Credit Recovery [Policy 3421](#), repealing policy 3421 to make the manual user-friendly.

The revised Graduation Requirement [Policy 3460](#) updates the policy to align with state requirements. It details district requirements students need to meet in order to graduate. The revised policy also includes language on how the district will assist students who have transferred into the district to graduate on time.

Additionally, the Board of Education's Policy Committee voted to send the following personnel policies out for a 30-day public comment period:

- [Policy 7100 Equal Opportunity Employment \(new title: Recruitment and Selection of Personnel\)](#)
- [Policy 7101 Criminal Records Checks and Reporting Alleged Violations of Law: Employees \(new title: Equal Opportunity Employment\)](#)
- [Policy 7102 Recruitment Selection of Licensed Employees \(repeal\)](#)
- [Policy 7103 Employment of Relatives \(repeal\)](#)
- [Policy 7120 Employee Health Certificate \(new\)](#)
- [Policy 7130 Licensure](#)
- [Policy 7301 Code of Ethics \(new title: Staff Responsibilities\)](#)

The recommended revisions change the titles of policies 7100, 7101 and 7301 to better align with the North Carolina School Boards (NCSBA) coding system and to update the content to conform to state law. These changes enable GCS to be more aligned with the numerous NC school systems that use this coding system and make future model policies the district receives from NCSBA more useful. While the content of the policies is recommended to be reorganized, the content contains only minor updates and clarifications, as well as reflecting a change in state law that requires fingerprinting for employees who work with children enrolled in pre-kindergarten.

The public can mail comments to the GCS Central Office at 712 N. Eugene Street or email them to boardclerk@gcsnc.com. After comments for 30 days, the Board will then consider the policies at their next board meeting.

More GCS Schools Will Offer Free Meals Next Year

More GCS students will receive free meals next year. An additional 27 schools have qualified for Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) status, meaning because of the high need in the community, all students in the school may eat for free.

For the 2023-24 school year, 92 GCS schools will have CEP status, an increase from 65 this year.

Eleven elementary schools, eight middle schools and eight high schools will be added.

**Claxton Elementary
Florence Elementary
Gibsonville Elementary
Lindley Elementary
Millis Road Elementary
Monticello-Brown Summit Elementary
Pilot Elementary
Pleasant Garden Elementary
Sedalia Elementary
Shadybrook Elementary
Southern Elementary
Academy at Lincoln
Eastern Middle
Jamestown Middle
Kiser Middle
Mendenhall Middle
Penn-Griffin School for the Arts
Southeast Middle
Southwest Middle
Academy at Smith
Eastern High
Kearns Academy
Middle College at GTCC-High Point
Page High
Ragsdale High
Southern High
Western High**

[Click here](#) for a list of all CEP schools.

“Through this expansion, 72 percent of our students will automatically have access to free breakfast and lunch,” says Superintendent Dr. Whitney Oakley. Community Eligibility Provision is a facet of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, which provides an alternative to household eligibility applications for free and reduced-price meals in high-poverty local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools.

A school will qualify for CEP status if enough of its students are directly certified through other means, including participation in the following programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits;
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits;
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); or
- Medicaid

In addition, schools may qualify if enough students are homeless, migrant youth, runaways or participate in Head Start or another comparable State or Indian Tribal Organization-funded pre-kindergarten program.

Families at non-CEP schools may still qualify to receive free or reduced-price meals by completing the application for meal benefits at www.lunchapplication.com. The application will open for the 2023-24 school year on July 1. Families at all schools are encouraged to complete the application, as the information can be used by the district to qualify for grants and other poverty-based programs.

GCS Summer Meal Distribution Returns

Beginning June 20, young people living in Guilford County will be able to have free breakfast and lunch. More than 20 school and community locations will host summer meal distributions. The school locations are:

**Archer Elementary
Brightwood Elementary
Eastern High
Hairston Middle
High Point Central High
Hunter Elementary
Irving Park Elementary
Jamestown Elementary
Jones Elementary
Kirkman Park Elementary
Northeast High
Oak Hill Elementary
Pilot Elementary**

**Shadybrook Elementary
Simkins Elementary
Smith High
Southwest Elementary
Summerfield Elementary
Washington Elementary
Welborn Middle**

Meals are available Monday through Thursday from 8 to 9 a.m. for breakfast and 11 a.m. to noon for lunch. Students who live near Falkener Elementary can visit the meal site at Hairston Middle School.

Guilford County Schools (GCS) will also serve meals to students involved in summer academic programs and to community locations for families unable to get to school sites. An interactive map located on the district's [data dashboard](#) allows families to input their zip code and find school and community meal sites closest to them. Young people visiting meal sites must stay at the facility and eat their meals.

Meals will not be distributed the week of July 3, as the district will be closed. Additional meals will be provided on June 30. The summer meal program will continue through August 17.

GCS Class of 2023

Guilford County Schools (GCS) seniors have earned an impressive \$180,878,276 in scholarship and grant awards. Superintendent Dr. Whitney Oakley made the announcement during a ceremony celebrating the success of the class of 2023 this morning.

The scholarship total is the highest since the pandemic. The class of 2023 spent half of their high-school experience under pandemic restrictions.

"This class has faced unimaginable challenges and persevered. Our teachers, counselors and school staff have worked tirelessly to be champions for our students and help them reach this exciting milestone," Oakley said. "I am grateful for their work, and I am so proud of the outstanding progress of our students."

Several schools received more than \$10 million in awards, including Northwest with \$10 million; The Early College at Guilford reported \$12 million; Dudley with \$14 million; Page students earned \$17 million, and Grimsley High led the list of schools with its students reporting more than \$19 million in scholarships and grant awards.

Brian David O'Connell III's scholarship awards accounted for more than half of the total award amount at Eastern. The valedictorian and student-athlete said his parents, both GCS teachers, have influenced him most throughout his academic career. This fall, he will attend the University of Tampa to major in finance and play baseball.

GCS students did not just earn money but also significantly contributed to the local economy. In addition to completing their coursework, hundreds of GCS students will cross the stage this weekend with an additional service-learning diploma, recognizing their work to improve the county. GCS seniors have completed more than 111,000 service-learning hours. Their volunteerism efforts added \$3,348,000 to the local economy.

"The mission of Guilford County Schools is to graduate responsible citizens. The number of service-learning hours and scholarship dollars earned is not only astounding, but it also demonstrates that we are truly better together when we work as a team to improve the lives of people in our community," Superintendent Oakley said.

These seniors are a part of the more than 5,000 members of the class of 2023 who are celebrating academic, athletic, personal and professional accomplishments this weekend. GCS recognizes the first class of graduates from the five-signature career academies that welcomed their first cohort of students in 2023. These programs helped students earn credentials in high-paying trades and careers, including transportation, drone, logistics, advanced manufacturing, engineering, computer, health and biomedical sciences. Students enrolled in College and Career Promise programs earned more than 10,000 college credits, saving them more than \$808,000 in college tuition. Nearly 3,000 seniors were enrolled in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

"As more companies like Toyota, Boom Supersonic and VinFast begin to call North Carolina home, I am proud to say that our students have what it takes to be competitive and successful in the global workforce," Dr. Oakley said.

GCS also celebrates sixteen students from the Teacher Cadet programs at Western and Page High Schools. This year, they've been partnered with veteran teachers in GCS, getting a hands-on lesson about what it means to be an educator. They've assisted students in elementary, middle and high school reach their highest potential.

"As education programs close nationwide and with the looming teacher shortage, districts must deploy innovative strategies to recruit teachers and build the bench. We are doing just that in Guilford County," Superintendent Oakley shared. "These students are going to college with some training already, so we need to make sure salaries remain competitive in NC to keep them here. This is another example of how many graduates are leaving GCS better prepared for the world and ready to give back to the community."

All ceremonies are being live streamed through the district's website at www.gcsnc.com/2023grads.



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