Charleston students deserve leadership stability more than ever

BY DANIEL PRENTICE

Charleston County School District is a place I know in two profoundly different ways.

Long before I ever sat through a budget workshop or presented a multiyear financial plan, I sat in these classrooms as a student. I graduated from Charleston County School of the Arts, shaped by the teachers, principals and support staff who remain the heartbeat of this district. Today, as chief financial officer, I am responsible for stewarding the resources that allow those educators to do their work.

That dual perspective of serving as a student and a steward gives me a clear view of what our district needs most at this moment: stability in leadership.

For too long, Charleston County has experienced a cycle of churn at the top. Superintendents arrive with bold ideas and strategic direction, only to depart before those plans can be fully realized. Each transition comes with a predictable cost. Priorities shift. Momentum stalls. Staff morale dips. Millions of dollars in work tied to long-term improvement, curriculum alignment, literacy and math interventions, strategic staffing and capital planning lose traction. In a system of our size and complexity, instability is a setback.



Prentice

What is often overlooked in public debate is how stability at the superintendent level directly affects outcomes for students and families. The academic progress we are seeing today is built on a through line of leadership: the former superintendent who helped establish these district priorities; the current superintendent, who then as deputy superintendent helped design, refine and operationalize many of those same initiatives before ultimately being handed the baton; and the teams that sustained the work even when someone briefly filled the seat for a few months in between.

Consider our steady gains in ELA and math proficiency, rising achievement among multilingual learners, improvements in early literacy indicators and upward movement in nationally normed growth data. These gains did not happen by accident. They came from consistent, targeted leadership that insisted on evidence-based strategies and protected them through budget cycles and operational challenges.

I have seen the power of this kind of stability before. In the last public organization I served, the same leader had been in the top seat for more than 20 years. The alignment and strategic clarity that came from that continuity made an unmistakable difference. Initiatives had time to mature, staff knew what to expect and the organization's achievements were not episodic but sustained. That stability was repeatedly and publicly acknowledged as one of the driving forces behind its success. It is an example worth remembering here in Charleston County, where our challenges are similarly complex and the stakes are arguably higher.

Every major improvement we are seeing now began with decisions made several years ago by the current superintendent, who championed many of these efforts in her earlier leadership roles and has provided consistent and focused direction to carry the work forward. This includes investments in data systems, new instructional materials, expanded student supports and community partnerships. These changes take years, not months, to fully mature. If leadership shifts midstream, the district risks losing the very progress that taxpayers, teachers and families have worked hard to build.

From a financial perspective, continuity is equally essential. Charleston County taxpayers entrust us with over a billion dollars annually. Multiyear budgeting, capital planning, bond ratings, school construction schedules and organizational structuring all depend on a stable administration. The superintendent is the anchor for this process, and instability reverberates beyond our central office. It affects teacher recruitment and retention at a time when every district is fighting to keep talented educators. Teachers look for districts with predictable leadership, clear direction and follow-through. When they see sudden changes at the top, they reasonably worry about shifting expectations, abandoned initiatives or inconsistent support. Stability in the superintendent's seat is a recruitment tool, but it is also a promise to our staff that the district stands behind the work they have been asked to undertake.

As someone who walked the halls of the district's schools and now works every day to sustain the progress our students are making, I believe deeply that Charleston County cannot afford to continue cycling through leadership. Our superintendent has provided a clear vision rooted in student outcomes, fiscal responsibility and a steady commitment to neighborhood schools. That direction deserves the continuity needed to fully succeed.

Leadership stability is not a political choice; rather, it is our moral obligation to the constituents we serve. The students who sit in our classrooms today cannot wait for the adults to settle their differences. They deserve the consistent support I was fortunate enough to receive as a student years ago. Our community expects growth, accountability, safe schools and sound financial stewardship. Those expectations can only be met when the district maintains stable, capable and consistent leadership.

Charleston County students deserve a superintendent who is empowered to finish the work they have started. And our community deserves a school district focused on long-term progress, not perpetual resets. Stability is essential.

Daniel Prentice is the chief financial officer for the Charleston County School District.

PENGAD 800-631-6989
DEFENDANT'S EXHIBIT
A

10. Darlene

Charleston County SCHOOL DISTRICT

John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us>

Re: Circle of Life Program Proposal (St. Johns High School)

10 messages

Anita Huggins <anita_huggins@charleston.k12.sc.us> Fri, Jun 16, 2023 at 8:35 AM
To: Aaron White <aswhite2@coastal.edu>
Cc: Jermaine Joyner <jermaine_joyner@charleston.k12.sc.us>, Eugene White <ewhite@eastwest.com>, "Sherry_eppelsheimer@charleston.k12.sc.us" <Sherry_eppelsheimer@charleston.k12.sc.us>, "COBB, JOHNE" <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us>

DAR

Mr. White,

Thank you, again, for this proposal; I hope you and your family are well. Thank you, too, for being in touch with me.

I believe Mr. Joyner intends to follow-up with you if he hasn't already had a chance to do so; it's been a busy time getting students graduated. In the interim, I've forwarded your proposal to Mr. John Cobb and asked that he connect with you about the services you offer.

Smiles,
Anita

On Thu, May 25, 2023 at 3:38 PM Aaron White <aswhite2@coastal.edu> wrote:

> Good afternoon Mr. Joyner,
>
> Thank you again for consideration of the Circle of Life Program to be implemented at St. John's High School. As a follow-up to our presentation and discussions over the past few weeks regarding the Circle of Life Program implementation for the 2023-2024 school year, attached is the program proposal and budget.
>
> I have included Ms. Huggins and Ms. Eppelsheimer for their awareness. Looking forward to your review and providing us direction on how we proceed. Thanks so much!
>
> Regards,
>
> Aaron S. White
> 843-364-6829

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Anita W. Huggins
Deputy Superintendent

PENGAD 800-631-6989 DEFENDANT'S EXHIBIT B

John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us> Fri, Jun 16, 2023 at 12:14 PM
To: Aaron White <aswhite2@coastal.edu>
Cc: Anita Huggins <anita_huggins@charleston.k12.sc.us>, Jermaine Joyner <jermaine_joyner@charleston.k12.sc.us>, Eugene White <ewhite@eastwest.com>, "Sherry_eppelsheimer@charleston.k12.sc.us" <Sherry_eppelsheimer@charleston.k12.sc.us>

You are very welcome. We will reach out to you soon. Mr. Joyner is away at a leadership conference next week.

[Quoted text hidden]

Jermaine Joyner <jermaine_joyner@charleston.k12.sc.us> Fri, Jun 16, 2023 at 1:13 PM
To: John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us>
Cc: Anita Huggins <anita_huggins@charleston.k12.sc.us>, "Sherry_eppelsheimer@charleston.k12.sc.us" <sherry_eppelsheimer@charleston.k12.sc.us>

I've followed up with Mr. White about the proposal and had a honest conversation with him. Although he had a very well put together presentation and this would be a great program for our kids, his proposed cost for the program is too much. With his proposal, I could hire 2-3 full time employees and have them dedicated solely to the work he is proposing. In addition they would work directly under me and could assist with other tasks. As I explained to him, if the district had that type of money, I would rather it be allocated directly to the school. I was expecting his cost to be about a tenth of what he proposed.

[Quoted text hidden]

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Sent from Gmail Mobile

Anita Huggins <anita_huggins@charleston.k12.sc.us> Sun, Jul 2, 2023 at 9:20 AM
To: John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us>

Will you please update me on this work with Mr. White? Smiles, Anita

On Fri, Jun 16, 2023 at 12:15 PM John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us> Mon, Jul 3, 2023 at 7:58 AM
To: Jermaine Joyner <jermaine_joyner@charleston.k12.sc.us>

Let me know when you are back in your building. I should be able to assist with resolving the concerns. I spoke to Mr. White after our conversation at SCASA.

[Quoted text hidden]

Please let me know if you would like to discuss and we can coordinate. Thanks so much for your time and direction of this. It is much appreciated.

Regards,

Aaron S. White

From: John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us>
Sent: Monday, July 3, 2023 8:35:22 AM
To: Aaron White <aswhite2@coastal.edu>
Subject: Re: Proposal

[Quoted text hidden]

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3 attachments

Circle of Life Program Proposal 2023 final.pdf
2575K

COL Program Budget 23-24, 24-25.pdf
1107K

Statement of Work-Timeline-Deliverables (Circle of Life Program)) 1.pdf
723K

Aaron White <aswhite2@coastal.edu> **Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 11:36 AM**
To: John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us>

Good morning Mr. Cobb,

Hope all is well. Just wanting to follow-up and confirm you received the documents I sent last week? Let me know if you have any questions, concerns, or if anything else is needed. Thank you!

Regards,

Aaron S. White

From: Aaron White <aswhite2@coastal.edu>
Sent: Monday, July 3, 2023 1:57 PM
[Quoted text hidden]
[Quoted text hidden]

John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us> **Tue, Jul 11, 2023 at 3:14 PM**
To: Anita Huggins <anita_huggins@charleston.k12.sc.us>

I have reviewed the proposal from Mr. White. His proposal is allowable. We will have to decide what is the expectation if a full caseload of students is not enrolled. His proposal is for two years at a rate of $238,500 annually (total = $477,000). He plans to work with both St. Johns and Haut Gap Middle schools. We can make this a part of the D23/D4 projects because both of these projects are projected to come in under budget.

[Quoted text hidden]

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3 attachments

Circle of Life Program Proposal 2023 final.pdf
2575K

COL Program Budget 23-24, 24-25.pdf
1107K

Statement of Work-Timeline-Deliverables (Circle of Life Program)) 1.pdf
723K

John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us> **Tue, Jul 11, 2023 at 3:17 PM**
To: Aaron White <aswhite2@coastal.edu>

Thank you for the information. I have forwarded this for final approval. To be clear, are you working with Haut Gap and St. John's this year, then adding elementary schools in the future?
[Quoted text hidden]

Aaron White <aswhite2@coastal.edu> **Tue, Jul 11, 2023 at 3:27 PM**
To: John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us>

Great! Thank you so much, Mr. Cobb. And yes that is correct. If approved, the full comprehensive program will be implemented at St. Johns this year as well as a staggered rollout at Haut Gap mid-year. Then Elementary schools in the future.

Regards,

Aaron S. White

From: John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us>
Sent: Tuesday, July 11, 2023 3:18 PM
[Quoted text hidden]
[Quoted text hidden]

John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us> **Tue, Jul 11, 2023 at 3:57 PM**
To: Anita Huggins <anita_huggins@charleston.k12.sc.us>

Proposal was forwarded to Anita.

——— Forwarded message ———
From: **Aaron White** <aswhite2@coastal.edu>
Date: Tue, Jul 11, 2023 at 3:27 PM
Subject: Re: Proposal
To: John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us>

[Quoted text hidden]

Anita Huggins <anita_huggins@charleston.k12.sc.us> **Wed, Jul 12, 2023 at 7:09 AM**
To: John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us>
Cc: MICHELLE SIMMONS <michelle_simmons@charleston.k12.sc.us>

Good Morning, John,

Thanks so much for connecting with me on this.

I assumed upon initial review to the plan, most of the expenditures were allowable. However, Mr. Joyner was not interested in the services at that time and was concerned about the cost compared to services provided. Were you able to work with D9 feeder pattern principals to see whether this is something they want/need for their students/families? What was their feedback?

THANKS for everything! Smiles, Anita

[Quoted text hidden]

—
Anita W. Huggins
Deputy Superintendent
Office of the Superintendent
Charleston County School District
75 Calhoun Street
Charleston, SC 29401
843.937.6305
www.ccsdschools.com

John Cobb <johne_cobb@charleston.k12.sc.us> **Wed, Jul 12, 2023 at 1:14 PM**
To: Anita Huggins <anita_huggins@charleston.k12.sc.us>
Cc: MICHELLE SIMMONS <michelle_simmons@charleston.k12.sc.us>

Anita, you asked me to work with Mr. White and Mr. Joyner. Mr. Joyner is concerned about the cost. He is willing to accept the services if his school accounts do not fund The Circle of Life Program. I spoke to Mr. White, who will provide assistance to Haut Gap and St. John's. Mr. White intends to provide services to elementary schools in the future.
I am unaware of a D9 feeder pattern of principals that have come together for a common purpose. I am not in charge of principals to call meetings. I have to respect their time and stay in my lane.

The service he is providing is allowable. I need someone to direct me to the funding to make this happen. If this is not going to happen, it would be professional to notify Mr. White so he is not waiting in vain.
Smiles,

[Quoted text hidden]

ELLIS ROBERTS
ATTORNEY AT LAW

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ellis@ellisrobertslaw.com

September 28, 2026

Kambrell Garvin, Esq.
Kambrell Garvin Law Firm, LLC
2731 River Drive
Columbia, SC 29201

Todd Rutherford, Esq.
Rutherford Law
1315 Blanding Street
Columbia, SC 29201

RE: Aaron White and the Circle of Life Foundation

Dear Mr. Garvin and Mr. Rutherford,

Thank you for allowing an opportunity to present on behalf of my client; unfortunately, Aaron White and the Circle of Life Foundation have not once been contacted by the Office of Inspector General or the Charleston County School District regarding the allegation Ms. Dunmeyer-Roberson aided Aaron in a procurement matter with CCSD. As a result, the Inspector General's findings have been put forth as facts, public meetings have taken place, suspensions have been imposed, and press releases have been sent which all have cast Aaron and his organization in a negative light and damaged Aaron's personal and professional reputation in his community.

Since Aaron has not had an opportunity to rebut the allegations in the report, he has asked me to include a statement from him in this correspondence:

Statement of Aaron White

My name is Aaron White; I was born on Wadmalaw Island in South Carolina and graduated from St. John's High School. I earned a bachelor's degree at Coastal Carolina and my master's in social work from the University of South Carolina in 2018. I subsequently became a licensed social worker by the state of South Carolina following graduation. In addition to my social work counseling, I have also worked on numerous political campaigns including Darlene Dunmeyer-Roberson's 2022 campaign for Charleston County School Board.

Several months after the 2022 campaign ended, my cousin and I decided to create a nonprofit called the Circle of Life Foundation with the idea of serving youth in our community. We had spent years talking about doing this. On May 2, 2023, our cousin, De'Andre Tommie, was murdered in his driveway on Wadmalaw. De'Andre was eighteen years old and just a few weeks away from graduating St. John's High School. In the immediate wake of this tragedy we knew we wanted to help students at St. John's in hopes of preventing this from ever happening again.



On May 5, 2023, Ms. Dunmeyer-Roberson sent an introductory email to the principal at St. John's so my cousin and I could talk about what the needs are and how we can give back to our alma mater. We had a wonderful meeting with the principal and discussed a wide range of topics on the support needed for St. John's and its students. Over the course of the next year, I started to formulate a plan to provide counseling services and mentorship to students in need at St. John's. This led to me submitting a proposal in 2024 to CCSD, along with two other applicants, to perform an array of services under my license as a social worker. I believe I was awarded the contract due to my qualifications and expertise in this very field of social work which set me apart from others. While performing this work at St. John's, CCSD extended my contract based on the work we were doing. We were able to have a positive impact and touch the lives of so many young students, and I will cherish the work we did then for the rest of my life.

Not once did I ask for, nor receive, assistance from Darlene Dunmeyer-Roberson to get the contract I subsequently earned. Ms. Dunmeyer-Roberson and I have never been associates or associated with one another. We have never been in business together. Ms. Dunmeyer-Roberson and I have never had a shared economic interest. Ms. Dunmeyer-Roberson has never been involved in the Circle of Life Foundation and certainly has never had a fiduciary interest in the same. At no time in 2023, 2024, or any other period did I seek out Ms. Dunmeyer-Roberson for assistance, nor did I receive any assistance from her, in receiving contract work for CCSD. Ms. Dunmeyer-Roberson has never received a penny from me or from the Circle of Life Foundation in connection with my work for CCSD. Thank you for your time.

All My Best, Aaron White

On behalf of my client, I wish there had been outreach from the Inspector General prior to the report being issued and subsequently made public. A simple phone call would have allowed a response and evidence to disprove the conflict-of-interest charge and cleared up any of these alleged improprieties and Mr. White's name and reputation would never have been dragged through the mud as a result.

Thank you for allowing this letter to be a part of the record, I hope this will provide clarity to this unfortunate situation.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,



D. Ellis Roberts

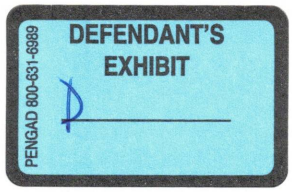
ADDRESSING BOARD MEMBER VIOLATIONS

Code **BCC** *Issued* **1/17**

The board and each of its members are committed to faithful compliance with the provisions of the board's policies. The board recognizes that its failure to deal with deliberate or continuing violations of its policies risks the loss of confidence in the board's ability to govern effectively. Therefore, in the event of a member's mistaken, willful and/or continuing violation of policy, the board ordinarily will address the issue by the following process:

- conversation in a private setting between the member considered to be in violation and the board chair or other individual member
- discussion in a private session between the member considered to be in violation and the full board
- possible removal by the board from any leadership positions to which the offending member has been appointed or elected
- censure of the offending member of the board as a means of separating the board's focus and intent from those of the offending member

Adopted 1/23/17



BOARD MEMBER CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Code **BCB** *Issued* **1/17**

Board members shall avoid engaging in conduct that creates a conflict of interest with the board member's duties to the district or that appears to create such a conflict.

A board member shall not be an employee of the district, nor shall a board member receive any compensation for services rendered to the district, other than legally defined and authorized compensation or reimbursement for serving as a member of the board.

No board member may knowingly use the board member's position to obtain an economic interest for the board member, a family member, an individual with whom the board member is associated, or a business with which the board member is associated.

If, in the discharge of official responsibilities, the board member is required to take an action or make a decision which affects his/her economic interest or the economic interest of a member of his/her immediate family or an individual with whom he/she is associated, the board member must prepare a written statement outlining the conflict and give it to the chairman of the board. The board member must also be excused from deliberating or voting on the matter. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect the disqualification and reasons for it.

The board member may vote on matters where he/she has no greater interest than does any other member of the class to which the board member belongs. For example, a board member may vote on a budget that includes salaries of all employees, even if the board member has a family member employed by the district. However, the board member may not vote on the contract of an individual family member.

A board member may not:

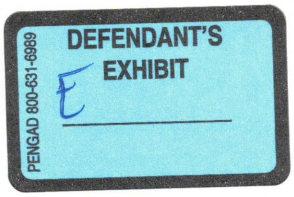
- Have an economic interest in a contract with the district if the board member is authorized to perform an official function relating to the contract. The law defines "official function" to include accepting bids and awarding contract.
- Participate in an action relating to the discipline of his/her family member.
- Be engaged as an employee of the district, nor may an immediate family member (parent, spouse, child, brother, or sister) be engaged as an employee of the district without the written approval of the board. This does not apply to family members so employed before the board member was elected.
- Disclose or use confidential information acquired during the performance of official duties as a means to further the board member's own personal financial interests or the interests of a member of the board's immediate family.

Adopted 5/10/73; Revised 11/10/80, 12/8/86, 7/26/04, 1/23/17

Legal references:

A. S.C. Constitution:
   1. Article XVII, Section 1A - Dual office holding prohibited.

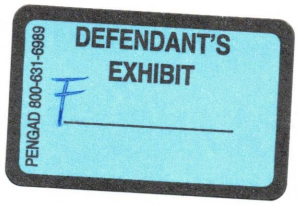
B. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:
   1. Section 8-13-100, *et seq.* - State Ethics Act.



(see next page)

2. Section 59-19-300 - Prohibits receiving pay as teacher in same district where serving on board.
3. Section 59-25-10 - Prohibits board from employing members of immediate family, with exceptions.
4. Section 59-31-590 - Prohibits service as agent of school book publisher.
5. Section 59-69-260 - Authorizes board member to provide services or sell products to the district...so long as these transactions are in accordance with state ethical provision of law.

BOARD MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS



Code **BCA** *Issued* **6/25**

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for ethical board conduct.

The board of trustees of the Charleston County School District commits itself and its members to ethical, civil, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as board members. The board shall have the authority and responsibility to apply these standards of conduct.

A board member shall honor the high responsibility that his/her membership demands by doing the following:

- thinking always in terms of effectively meeting educational goals for all children
- understanding that the basic function of a school board is policymaking, not administration, and accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions
- accepting the responsibility along with this his/her fellow board members of budgeting so that facilities and resources are provided for the effective functioning of schools
- placing children's interests above partisan or other political interests
- representing, at all times, the entire school district
- accepting the responsibility of becoming well informed concerning the Freedom of Information Act as it relates to board service and public bodies
- recognizing responsibility as a state official to seek the improvement of education throughout the state
- conforming to a standard of civility in interactions with other board members, employees, students, and the public so as to treat all persons with dignity and courtesy; profanity, threats, threatening job termination, or abusive language is prohibited and, if used, may subject a board member to public reprimand and, if repeated, constitutes cause of removal from office through the procedures as provided in S.C. Code Section 59-19-60

In order to build and maintain productive and effective relationships among themselves and with the superintendent and staff, board members shall maintain a system of communication and interaction that builds upon mutual respect and trust by, among other things:

- recognizing that authority rests only with the board in official meetings and that the individual member has no legal status to bind the board outside of such meetings
- refraining from assuming personal responsibility for resolving operational problems or complaints; complaints will be referred to the superintendent for investigation and resolution
- refraining from attempting to personally direct any part of the operational organization
- recognizing the integrity of his/her predecessors and associates and the merit of their work
- keeping an open mind on matters before the board by committing to a vote only after hearing the facts and opinions of others in a board meeting properly noticed under the Freedom of Information Act
- respecting the opinion of others and graciously conforming to the principle of majority rule
- making every reasonable effort to protect the integrity and promote the positive image of the district and one another
- maintaining the confidentiality appropriate to sensitive issues and information, especially those matters discussed in executive session

A board member should maintain desirable relations with the superintendent of schools and his/her staff by doing the following:

- striving to procure, when a vacancy exists, the best professional leader available for the superintendency

- giving the superintendent full operational authority for properly discharging his/her professional duties and holding him/her responsible for acceptable results
- acting only upon the recommendation of the superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel per the Act of Consolidation
- having the superintendent present at all meetings of the board except when his/her contract and salary are under consideration
- striving to provide adequate safeguards around the superintendent and other staff members to the end that they can live happily and comfortably in the community and discharge their educational functions on a thoroughly professional basis
- presenting personal criticisms of any employee, including of the superintendent, directly to the superintendent or the board chairman, but doing so in confidence

Adopted 12/8/75; Revised 12/8/86, 11/11/91, 7/26/04, 10/13/08, 4/27/09, 9/14/15, 1/23/17, 06/9/25

Legal References:

A. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:
   1. Section 8-13-100, *et seq.* - Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act.
   2. Section 59-19-300 - Prohibits receiving pay as teacher in same district where serving on board.
   3. Section 59-25-10 - Prohibits board from employing members of immediate family as a teacher, with exceptions.

B. 2025 Act 77 – Abolishes the Constituent Districts

DEFENDANT'S EXHIBIT
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PENGAD 800-631-6989

ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Code **GBEBD** *Issued* **7/17**

Purpose: To establish the board's vision and the basic structure for the acceptable use of technology resources in Charleston County School District.

Acceptable Use

It is the policy of Charleston County School District that use of district information technology shall be for district educational or business purposes, shall conform to district technology and security standards, and shall be ethical and comply with all applicable board policies and law.

This policy constitutes an Internet safety policy within the meaning of the Children's Internet Protection Act (47 U.S.C. § 254).

Applicability

This policy applies to every person who uses a district computer, mobile device, or electronic system or service in any manner including employees, students, contractors, visitors, and volunteers.

Scope

The following district systems and services are within the scope of this policy:

- telephones, smartphones, two-way radios, and fax machines
- computer systems including desktops, laptops, mobile devices, printers, and wired and wireless networks
- any electronic activity on CCSD Internet systems including, but not limited to, email, web content and systems, and district intranet content
- video systems, including distance learning and ETV systems
- software including, but not limited to, the following:
  - instructional and office software
  - district financial systems
  - human resource systems
  - student information systems
  - school and department websites
  - learning management software
  - digital workflow solutions
- all other district information technology or electronic communications, whether or not the device used is owned, leased, contracted, or otherwise utilized by the district, and regardless of the user's physical location

Standards for acceptable use of information technology

Use of district information technology systems and services is subject to the following standards. By accessing or using these systems or services, the user accepts without limitation or qualification the terms and conditions of these standards.

<u>Use shall be lawful and ethical</u>

Users may not engage in any of the following prohibited behaviors when using or accessing CCSD's Internet systems:

(see next page)

- communicating unlawful, threatening, harassing, libelous, defamatory, obscene, or offensive content
- accessing visual depictions that may be obscene, pornographic, or harmful to minors
- using false or deceptive identity
- obtaining unauthorized access to or alteration or disruption of a communications or computer system
- using the CCSD Internet system in a manner that interferes with the education of the user or others or the job duties of the user or others
- downloading, posting, reproducing, or distributing music, photographs, video, or other works in violation of applicable copyright laws

  Any music, photographs, and/or video should only be downloaded for district and not personal purposes. If a work specifies how that work may be used (through creative commons licensing, for example), the user should follow the expressed requirements. If users are unsure whether or not they can use a work, they should request permission from the copyright or trademark owner.

- engaging in plagiarism (taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were original to the user)

Use by all personnel shall be for district business purposes

- Use for commercial, personal, political, or religious purposes is prohibited. For example, "My car is for sale" is not permitted on the district web or email systems.

- Personal calls on desktop or "landline" phones are limited to incidental local calls.

- Personal long distance calls and personal calls on district-issued cell phones may be reimbursable to the district.

- Personal communication is not permitted on district email systems.

Use by students and teachers must be for educational purposes

- Students using CCSD Internet systems including social media, student email, and digital workflow solutions for school-related communication and learning experiences will do the following:
  - make every reasonable effort to protect their own personal safety
  - promptly disclose to their teachers or other school employees any message or other activity they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable
  - comply with the CCSD student code of conduct in all online behavior and communications
  - not allow their passwords to be saved on any CCSD computer or shared mobile device

- Teachers using CCSD Internet systems, including social media for instructional purposes will do the following:
  - be responsible for ensuring that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect students interacting online
  - model appropriate and responsible use
  - educate students about appropriate and safe online behavior when interacting with individuals on social networking websites
  - educate students in cyberbullying awareness and response
  - refer to the Common Sense Media Scope and Sequence and other free educational Internet safety resources available on the Internet

(see next page)

- Schools use a variety of online web-based interactive communication technologies to enhance students' learning. Social media sites must be used only for educational and school-related purposes in connection with lessons and assignments and to facilitate communication with teachers and other students. *"Social media" means any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, micro-blogs, Internet websites, Internet forums, and wikis.* Under some circumstances students may be required to share certain information about themselves either to log on to a site or to engage in an educational activity. For this reason, CCSD will require a release from the parent or guardian for any student wishing to participate. The release appears in the Student Code of Conduct. CCSD observes the requirements of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), 15 U.S.C. § 6501-6505.

  - CCSD limits access to these sites to individuals within CCSD. If access to a social media site will include individuals outside CCSD, parental consent is required.

  - If instructional Internet activities will involve social media, teachers must refer to the CCSD Instructional Use of Social Media Guidelines which are incorporated into this policy.

  - Teachers are responsible for reading and complying with terms and conditions of social media sites regarding user age and privacy settings.

<u>Technology products, services, and use shall conform to district standards</u>

- Hardware and software to be installed on district systems must be district approved.
- Websites and web pages created for the district must be district approved.
- Technology and communications systems must be used in a secure manner.

  - Passwords are not to be shared, posted, or disclosed.

  - Malicious tampering, phishing, or hacking activities are prohibited.

  - Users may not intentionally seek information about or modify passwords belonging to other users unless an employee is authorized to do so.

  - Attempting to log in through another person's account is prohibited.

  - Users may not attempt to gain access to material that is blocked or filtered by CCSD.

  - Accessing, copying, or modifying another user's files without authorization is prohibited.

  - Antivirus scans are to be made on any software, executable code, scripts, email, or other data on devices to be connected to district networks.

  - Personally identifiable information on students and other persons that is protected by law or considered confidential is not to be disclosed to unauthorized persons.

  - Use of information technology shall comply with security standards established by the district through its information technology department.

  - Only authorized software is to be locally installed on district computers.

(see next page)

Conditions of use

Safe and secure use by minors of district electronic communications (including email, social networking sites, and mobile apps) shall be assured. Use of district computers and mobile devices by minors to access the Internet shall be supervised at all times to comply with the standards of this policy.

Employee and student use of district electronic communications, computer systems, and mobile devices shall be filtered for appropriate use and content. Filtering shall be provided for all Internet enabled computers used by students and staff. Filtering shall be disabled only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Persons using district technology and electronic communications shall have no expectation of privacy in such use. Use of district technology and electronic communications may be monitored, logged, disclosed, deleted, or terminated by the district. Online activities of minors shall be monitored for appropriate use.

Employees have a duty to protect district technology resources entrusted to their use and to ensure that users comply with this policy. Employees shall report violations of this policy to district authorities.

Violations of this policy and its standards may be cause for revocation of use privileges, disciplinary action, including termination, and law enforcement actions.

Disclaimers

No warranties for the accuracy, quality, functionality, or availability of technology and communications are expressed or implied by this policy and these standards.

The district assumes no responsibility or liability for accuracy, integrity, quality, or acceptability of information or content of non-district technology including, but not limited to, non-district websites which may have links with district websites. Users are cautioned to use due care when accessing non-district information technology resources.

Adopted 1/26/98; Revised 2/23/98, 1/9/06, 2/11/08, 9/27/10, 7/21/15, 7/17/17

Legal References:

A. Federal Law:
   1. Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000, 47 U.S.C.A. Section 254(h).
   2. Copyright Act of 1976, 17 U.S.C.A. Section 101, *et seq*.
   3. The Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, 17 U.S.C.A. Section 512.
   4. Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986, 18 U.S.C.A. Section 1030.
   5. Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986, 18 U.S.C.A. Section 2510, *et seq*.

B. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:
   1. Section 16-3-850 - Encountering child pornography while processing film or working on a computer.
   2. Section 16-16-10, *et seq*. - Computer Crime Act.