



# The Anchor School

## FAMILY HANDBOOK

2023-2024

The policies in this Handbook may change from time to time, at the school's sole discretion.

[www.anchorschool.org](http://www.anchorschool.org)

*The Anchor School is a village of educators, families, and community members that partners with 6th through 12th grade students who are developing the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to thrive in school and beyond.*



## The Anchor School

July 2023

Dear Families,

Welcome to The Anchor School! Our staff has been working hard to create a world-class program for your scholar. We continue to prepare for the first day of school – and hope this document helps you and your family prepare for the first day as well. Together, we will ensure that every scholar develops the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to thrive in our school – and beyond.

This family handbook will give you a good understanding of our schools' mission, educational philosophy, policies, procedures, schedules, and expectations for everyone involved in the success of your scholar. The Anchor School is designed to be a challenging and transformational place for every member of our village. It is also designed to be a place where we all feel safe, supported, and successful in our endeavors.

For more information about The Anchor School, visit our website, [www.anchorschool.org](http://www.anchorschool.org).

We look forward to the work ahead!

Sincerely,

The Head of School and Board of Directors

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## MISSION

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The Anchor School is a village of educators, families, and community members that partners with 6th through 12th grade students who are developing the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to thrive in school and beyond. Through our commitment to excellent instruction, community partnerships, and holistic student development, we cultivate anchors that build a more just and equitable future.

## VISION

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We are committed to cultivating experiences that allow young people to understand who they are and to whom they are connected. Our educational approach supports intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth. Our students will become anchored internally and externally. Our graduates have the confidence, self-awareness, and community they need to succeed in and beyond the university.

## THE ANCHOR SCHOOL APPROACH

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**EXCELLENT INSTRUCTION:** All students deserve access to a high-quality education in their community. Great teachers are a major factor for student development<sup>i</sup>. Great teachers are life-long learners. They meet the unique needs of all students. They design experiences that allow students to apply their knowledge and skills in novel ways. Professional learning communities (PLCs), personalized rigor, and place-based projects define the approach to teaching and learning at The Anchor School.

- (1) PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES:** Many teachers report feeling isolated or underdeveloped at work<sup>ii</sup>. PLCs reduce feelings of isolation, increase teacher efficacy, and improve teacher retention<sup>iii</sup>. TAS cultivates a vibrant professional learning culture for students and teachers.

As stated before, TAS teachers will know and love their (1) content, (2) students, and (3) community. Designing meaningful learning experiences requires teachers to develop expertise in all three of these domains.

To ensure teachers know their content, TAS invests in rigorous, grade-level materials as the foundation of the curriculum. TAS curriculum selections allow teachers to align lessons, units, and assessments to rigorous grade-level content through research-backed, Georgia Standards for Excellence (GSE) aligned curriculum materials. TAS teachers deepen their knowledge of content through a lesson planning and internalization process which is facilitated by instructional coaches. Interdisciplinary team meetings also offer PLCs for development through collaborative planning, looking at student work, and consultancy protocols. TAS teachers learn about their students through daily interactions in class and advisory, daily reviews of student work, quarterly professional development rooted in culturally responsive teaching<sup>iv</sup> as a pedagogical approach to know and love learners, and annual panels featuring student voices. TAS teachers learn about metro Atlanta through a quarterly PLC, led by our partners and local scholars, rooted in the history of metro Atlanta and the community where

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the facility is located. TAS teachers also learn about the community through panels and presentations featuring community partners.

- (2) **PERSONALIZED RIGOR:** Many schools were designed in a “factory model” that lacks the capacity to personalize support for a diverse student population. Standardization and personalization do not have to be at odds. The school size, curriculum design, and staffing model at TAS allow students to graduate with more credits, more proficiency on standards of learning, and more personalization than most schools can accomplish.

Cohorts at TAS are smaller than average secondary groups. The cohort size and slow-growth approach at TAS allow for a degree of personalization and responsiveness that is difficult to accomplish in larger schools or schools that grow too fast.

To ensure a rigorous learning environment at TAS, students are routinely exposed to, and demonstrate proficiency in, the Georgia Standards of Excellence. TAS Graduation Requirements meet and exceed the expectations outlined in the rigorous Georgia Graduation Requirements.

To personalize the learning environment, TAS students have an individualized graduation plan<sup>v</sup>. These plans ensure all students have a plan to thrive in school and beyond. To support this vision of personalization, all students have the support of multiple purposeful longitudinal relationships (looping advisor, micro-village, and guidance counselor) and teachers are trained in personalization through a partnership with Modern Classrooms. The looping advisor serves as the primary point person on staff for a caseload of 12-15 students. To ensure these personalized plans remain rigorous, TAS utilizes a competency-based grading system to monitor progress towards proficiency, promotion, and graduation for all students.

- (3) **PLACE-BASED PROJECT COURSES:** A common concern for families and students is that too much learning lacks application or a connection to the real world. Adolescence is a critical period of brain development when connections are made between nodes of information stored in long-term memory. TAS will adopt project-based learning methods<sup>vi</sup> – and emphasize a physical place in the project<sup>vii</sup> – to support students in making interdisciplinary connections.

Every year, TAS students take traditional courses to learn the fundamental knowledge and skills needed to thrive in school and beyond (i.e. Mathematics, ELA). In addition to these courses, all students are enrolled in a place-based project course. These semester-long courses use projects about special topics to build neural connections across disciplines. Co-taught by a team of two teachers (one STEM and one Humanities), the curriculum weaves together grade-level content to reinforce and solidify learning from multiple disciplines. Students are part of a larger team which produces a real artifact or solution for a real client (one of our partner organizations). Partner organizations expose students to a variety of colleges, careers, workplaces, and challenges that exist beyond the four walls of the school. At the end of each semester, students celebrate their learning with presentations of their work to their teachers, peers, micro-villages, and clients. To further invest students in the topic, project courses emphasize a place they associate with (the school, Atlanta, Georgia, Earth, etc.).



## ORGANIZATIONAL BELIEFS

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The Anchor School holds six core beliefs as central to our work and our approach.



## COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS

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We ask all families and students in our community to make five commitments. We believe that if these commitments are upheld, our educational approach will support the holistic development of each scholar at The Anchor School. They are:

- Scholars arrive to school on time every day ready to learn.
- Scholars commit their full potential to their work and their growth.
- Families provide a quiet space for scholars to complete homework.
- Families support scholars to get a full night of sleep (8-10 hours).
- Families attend 4 micro-village conferences per year.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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The Anchor School's attendance policy is grounded in the belief that every student deserves access to an excellent education in their community. Accessing the excellent educational programming we provide requires attendance in school – every minute of every day. There is research connecting school attendance with school performance, so we will carefully monitor attendance and hold students and families accountable for good attendance habits. After 12 unexcused absences, The Anchor School will consider retention or withholding credits depending on the information provided in each case of absenteeism. After 10 unexcused absences, we will schedule a mandatory meeting with the Head of School and Principal. After 5 unexcused absences, we will schedule a mandatory meeting with the Advisor and Social Worker. Per state law, more than five (5) absences is

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considered truancy because research has indicated that missing more than five days of school begins to impact school performance and attitudes towards school.

Likewise, lateness is considered a serious violation of our community commitments. All scholars should arrive by 8:25 a.m. every school day. Any scholar entering the school at 8:45 a.m. or later is considered “late.” Your scholar will be given an unexcused absence when they accumulate five (5) late arrivals.

Absences are only excused in the following circumstances:

- Personal illness, if the scholar brings a note from a Medical Doctor. Only the dates written on the excuse note will be excused. Handwritten notes by parents will not be sufficient for excusing absences.
- A serious illness or death in a student’s immediate family.
- Absences caused by order of a government agency or court order.
- Observation of religious holidays.
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
- Registering to vote or voting in a public election, which shall not exceed one day.
- A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent’s or legal guardian’s deployment or during such parent’s or legal guardian’s leave.
- A student whose parent or legal guardian is currently serving or previously served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, in the Reserves of the armed forces of the United States on extended active duty, or in the National Guard on extended active duty may be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, not to exceed two school years, for the day or days missed from school to attend military affairs sponsored events, provided the student provides documentation prior to absence from: (i) A provider of care at or sponsored by a medical facility of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; or (ii) An event sponsored by a corporation exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Suspension, without alternative education, is an excused absence. The Anchor School reserves the right to verify that excuse notes are officially authorized. All notes should be delivered to the office coordinator in the main office.

**TRUANCY:** When a child is absent, parents, guardians, or other persons who have control of a child enrolled in TAS should report reasons for absences. Georgia law requires that after any student accrues five (5) days of unexcused absences in a given school year, the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of that child shall be in violation of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1(b). Any child that is subject to compulsory attendance who, during the school calendar year, has more than five (5) days of unexcused absences is considered truant. The law states the following:

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“Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who violates this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00, or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day’s absence from school in violation of this part after the child’s school system notifies the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused days of absence for a child shall constitute a separate infraction.”

Schools will notify parents/guardians when a student has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences. Schools will also notify parents/guardians of students 14 years of age and older when the student has accumulated seven (7) unexcused absences during the school year. Possible consequences may also include disposition for unruly children in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 15-11-67.

## **SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY**

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The Anchor School is a uniform school. All scholars must always be in uniform while at the school. If a scholar is not wearing their full uniform, they must correct the missing element of their uniform prior to reporting to class. The only required elements of the uniform for all students are: (1) a school permitted polo shirt or top, (2) school permitted bottoms, and (3) school permitted shoes.

### **SCHOOL PERMITTED ITEMS**



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Students are also permitted to wear navy blue or khaki skirts, skorts, or dresses. All skirts, skorts, or dresses must be no shorter than three inches above the knee. All shorts must be no shorter than five inches above the knee. These rules apply to all gender identities.



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## SCHOOL PERMITTED SHOES

Students are permitted to wear fully enclosed black leather shoes OR fully enclosed rubber sole sneakers because these shoes provide adequate support and protection during practical lessons.



In addition to these school permitted uniform items, students will be allowed to choose from a variety of uniform accessories including sweaters, sweatshirts, vests, jackets, Physical Education uniform items, and more. The intent of the uniform is to build school pride, cohesion, and safety for the regular activities happening on campus.

Exceptions to the dress code will be made for those in need of a religious exemption.

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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**PHILOSOPHY:** The Anchor School promotes a climate and culture which is characterized by feelings of safety, support, success, connection, belonging, challenge, affirmation, inclusion, and shared ownership of the school.

The Anchor School charter is, in essence, a contract between the school, the family, and the state of Georgia for how we will operate.

Our approach to discipline is rooted in culturally responsive pedagogy, restorative justice practices, and our core belief that the learning environment must be treated as a sacred and safe space for all of our students.

**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE:** When thinking about student discipline, TAS defines itself as a network of relationships that support the success and protect the potential of adolescents in school and beyond. When a relationship is damaged at any level (student-to-student, student-to-teacher, etc.), TAS prioritizes restoration over punishment. There is a growing body of evidence to support the use of restorative justice practices in schools. There is also a growing body of evidence to suggest that suspension and expulsion cause a great deal of harm with arguably no benefit. Restorative justice is a framework, with accompanying practices, to support the reconciliation of relationships that have been fractured by harmful actions. Restorative justice practices have been proven to increase respect, accountability, healing, and empathy in students who learn them. Restorative justice protocols allow students to answer questions like: (1) what happened? (2) how did it happen? (3) what part did you play in it? (4) how were you affected by what you did? (5) who else was affected by what you did? (6) what can you do to repair the harm? and (7) what do you need to make it right? In our community, where we operate as a village, these questions might be explored by students in the company of their

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teacher, advisor, family, mentor, and/or peers. Going back to what the school is – a network of relationships – restorative justice practices give TAS a framework and approach to heal and maintain relationships over time. Restorative justice requires training and expertise – which begin with the Head of School, School Social Worker, and Grade-Level Lead Teachers in Years 1-2. The group of personnel supporting restorative justice practices in the school beyond Year 3 includes all Directors, Associate Directors, and academy level Principals.

It is our belief that positive school and classroom cultures are established more through fostering relationships and developing value around positive and productive behaviors, than through punishment for undesired behaviors. Staff members are encouraged to leverage culturally responsive pedagogy and restorative justice practices to build positive classroom cultures – and to redirect student behavior. Students and staff are happiest, healthiest, and most likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in authority do things with them rather than to them or for them.

(80%) Proactive Relationship building	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Develop healthy relationships.</li><li>● Collectively identify common values and guidelines.</li><li>● Cultivate acceptance and understanding of others.</li><li>● Promote and strengthen a sense of belonging and ownership.</li><li>● Model and demonstrate respect, consistency, and fairness without judgement.</li></ul>	Schoolwide Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Classroom Norms</li><li>● Community &amp; Advisory Circles</li><li>● Culturally Responsive Practices</li><li>● Relationship Building Strategies</li><li>● Affective Statements (positive and negative)</li><li>● Affective Questions</li><li>● Modeling behavior</li><li>● Parent Contact (positive calls, micro-village meetings, open houses, emails, parent letters, personal introductions, etc.)</li></ul>
(15%) When should we be “WITH”	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● To prevent harm</li><li>● To resolve differences</li><li>● To promote social and emotional wellness</li><li>● To maintain a positive school climate and culture</li><li>● Tardies</li><li>● Class disruptions</li><li>● Disrespectful language</li><li>● Harmful behaviors</li><li>● Failure to complete assignments</li><li>● Lack of class engagement</li><li>● Skipping (1st offense)</li><li>● Academic dishonesty</li><li>● Minor dress code offenses</li><li>● Misuses of technology</li><li>● Unintentional damage to property</li></ul>	Teacher and Staff Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Affective statements</li><li>● Affective Questions</li><li>● Community circles to reemphasize class norms</li><li>● Impromptu conferencing</li><li>● Problem solving circles</li><li>● Student reflection sheet</li><li>● Hallway conferencing</li></ul>
(5%) When should we be “TO”	Actions

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<p>To repair a relationship or reintegrate a student into the community.</p> <p>To create a system of personal and collective accountability.</p> <p>To rebuild relationships within the learning community.</p> <p>To respond to any action that poses a safety risk to the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Endangering self or others</li> <li>● Fighting</li> <li>● Bullying</li> <li>● Intentional destruction of property</li> <li>● Major dress code offenses</li> </ul>	<p>Administrative Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Impromptu conferences</li> <li>● Affective questions</li> <li>● Problem solving circles</li> <li>● Formal restorative circle</li> <li>● Formal contract to repair harm</li> <li>● Reintegration plan</li> </ul>
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INTERVENTIONS: If a student needs additional support, intervention steps are outlined below.

**Our staff are expected to carry out each intervention in a way that is restorative to both the student and the staff member.** Parents, peer teachers, counselors, dean of students, and other support staff are viewed as a source of support throughout this process.

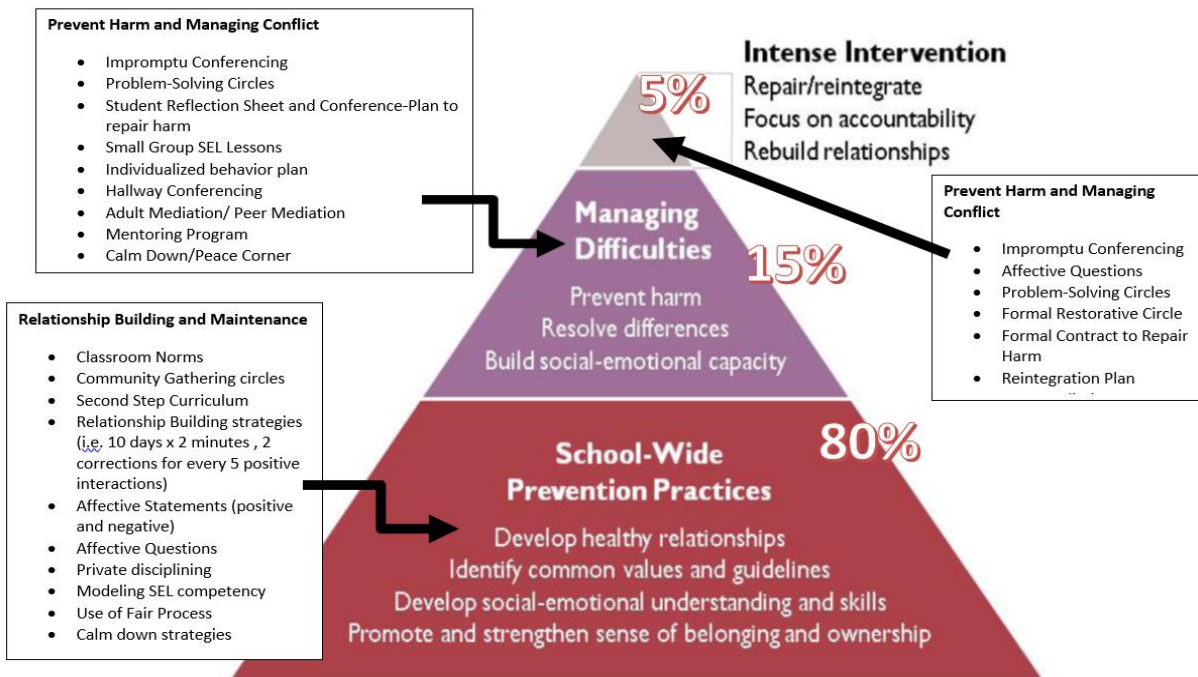
<p><b>Initial Interventions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warning – Verbal warning, Use of proximity, Change of location within the learning environment, Quick mindfulness practice, Narration of positive things happening in the learning environment, Private conversation or check-in</li> <li>2. Teacher/Student conference - Reflection (Journal or Discussion), Restorative Practices (see above)</li> <li>3. Parent Notification (logged into SIS) - Email, phone call (contact must be made)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Follow-Up Interventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher Intervention - example: Detention (a.m. or p.m.), Silent lunch, Lunch-and-Learn, Restitution</li> <li>● Request Case Conference with family and, possibly, other members of micro-village <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reach out to Head of School and Director of School Operations</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Referral <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tier 2 behavioral intervention</li> <li>○ Check-in-Check-out, behavior contract, motivation strategies etc. . .</li> <li>○ Individual counseling with social worker or therapist</li> <li>○ Group counseling with social worker or therapist</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Administrative Intervention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Office Referral - Restorative Circle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If an office referral is generated, the teacher/staff member will also be requested to be a part of the circle. Families will also be invited and expected in attendance at these conversations.</li> <li>○ Could result in the following: consequence determined by Head of School, detention, ISS, withdrawal of privileges, restorative justice action, peer mediation, or OSS.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Repeated Office Referral - Formal Restorative Circle (Parent and, possibly, other members of micro-village included) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Behavior contract (Parent/Student Accountability)</li> <li>○ Positive reinforcement</li> <li>○ Reward system for decrease of negative behavior</li> <li>○ Could result in the following</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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- OSS, ISS, Possible Social Worker, Wrap around Services, Tier 3 or expulsion referral
- Formal Contract to repair harm

## Restorative Practice Graphic



**SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION:** The state of Georgia defines short-term suspensions as those which last 10 days or less. TAS relies heavily on the quality of relationships in the school, the clarity of the code of conduct, and the consistency of implementing school-wide systems to prevent use of suspensions whenever possible. Through the commitment to build a more just and equitable future, TAS aims to minimize the use of suspensions to only the most severe violations of community standards outlined in the code of conduct. Whenever possible, the first response is restorative justice practices. In the rare event that a suspension is the outcome of an event on campus, a restorative justice practice will be utilized prior to a full return to an integrated and safe experience on campus.

**LONG-TERM SUSPENSION:** The state of Georgia defines long-term suspensions as those which last more than 10 days. TAS only uses long-term suspensions in the most serious cases that cannot be resolved immediately through restorative justice practices. Upon return to campus, a restorative justice practice will be utilized to ensure there is an opportunity for healing and reconciliation.

**EXPULSION:** The Anchor School only expels students for reasons that are legally required by Georgia law.

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**MANIFESTATION HEARINGS:** In any situation where TAS considers a suspension or expulsion for a student with an IEP or 504, TAS follows the provisions outlined in the IDEA law regarding manifestation meetings and hearing protocols. A manifestation determination meeting will be held any time a student is subject to possible suspension or expulsion greater than 10 school days, whether consecutive or cumulative. A team of individuals, including members of the student's micro-village, parents, general education teachers, special education teachers, the Head of School, and a certified child psychologist, will meet for the manifestation determination meeting. The purpose of this meeting is ultimately to answer two important questions: (1) "was the behavior caused by or directly and substantially related to the child's disability?" and (2) "was the behavior a direct result of the school's failure to implement the child's IEP?" If the IEP team concludes the behavior in question was the result of (a) the student's disability or (b) the school's failure to implement the student's IEP, then no further disciplinary action is taken, and the school conducts an internal investigation to determine root causes and to improve support plans and their implementation. If the IEP team concludes the behavior in question was not the result of (a) the student's disability or (b) the school's failure to implement the student's IEP, then the school proceeds with the disciplinary process as outlined for all students.

**DUE PROCESS:** If a student is recommended for a suspension more than 10 days— including expulsions — the student has a constitutional right for due process per the ruling of the United States Supreme Court in *Goss v. Lopez*. Due process, at a minimum, must include: (1) proper notice in the primary language of the family; (2) a timely opportunity to be heard in the primary language of the family; (3) a right to appeal the decision; and (4) a right to be represented by counsel if the student's family chooses. Proper notice must include the violation of community standards with reference to the code of conduct, the date and time of the violation, and the date and time of the hearing. Due process hearings must occur within 10 days of the first day of suspension. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. §. 20-2-750, this due process hearing is overseen by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party hearing officer. All this information is provided in the student code of conduct and reviewed in the annual information session about family and student rights.

**BULLYING:** Bullying is not tolerated at TAS. Our staff takes bullying seriously and will take disciplinary actions in cases where bullying is identified. Repeated incidents of student bullying will result in disciplinary actions including loss of privileges, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, etc., because this is required by state law.

### **Section 1: Definition of Bullying**

Bullying behavior is defined as:

- Willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so
- Intentionally exhibiting a display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect any immediate bodily harm
- Intentional written, verbal, or physical act which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate that:

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- Causes substantial physical harm within the meaning of O.C.G.A. § 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm capable of being perceived by a person other than the victim as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-5-23.1 and may include, but is not limited to, substantial injuries or pain
- Substantially interference with the victim's education
- Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school

Cyberbullying/Electronic Bullying: Bullying can occur on school property or through school technology resources but can also occur through the use of electronic communications. Whether or not that communication originated on school property with school technology resources, if the electronic communication is directed specifically at students or school personnel, maliciously intended for the purpose threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose it is considered a form of cyberbullying.

Retaliation against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process is also prohibited.

## **Section 2: Reporting, Investigation, and Notification Procedures**

All students and/or school employees shall immediately report incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and retaliation to the Head of School.

Employees, volunteers, students, and parents/guardians/other persons that have access to monitor students may anonymously report or otherwise provide information on bullying activity to a school administrator or by calling the Georgia Department of Education's 1-877-SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline. No person who reports bullying will be retaliated against by any school employee.

Each report of bullying shall be documented and promptly investigated, and result in consequences given appropriate to the situation and in accordance with law.

\*NOTE: Parents/guardians of students who are victims of bullying or are found to have committed bullying behaviors will be notified via conference or letter/referral. Staff members should report instances of these behaviors to school administration immediately so that administrators may review them in a timely manner. A meeting with administration is required with the parents of the student determined to have committed bullying behaviors.

Further, reported incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, or retaliation that have occurred outside the jurisdiction of the school and have not disrupted the school environment shall still be reported to the student's parent/guardian.





### Section 3: Disciplinary Procedures

Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused student should be charged with bullying and given an age-appropriate consequence in accordance with the Code of Conduct, which shall include, at minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances.

Students in grades six through eight found by a disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall be assigned to an alternative education program. Such alternative education program shall be provided in a setting other than the student's regular classroom, may be located on or off the regular school campus, may include in-school suspension that provides continued progress on regular classroom assignments, and shall provide for the student's educational and behavioral needs, to include supervision and counseling.

The School shall remain mindful of due process, special education, and Section 504 obligations, among others, when assigned students to alternative settings.

**SUICIDE POLICY:** TAS recognizes:

- (1) That physical, behavioral, and emotional health is an integral component of a student's educational outcomes,
- (2) That suicide is a leading cause of death among young people ages 10-19,
- (3) That the school has an ethical responsibility to:
  - a. Take a proactive approach in preventing deaths by suicide,
  - b. To provide an environment which is sensitive to individual and societal factors that place youth at greater risk for suicide, and
  - c. To foster positive youth development.

### Policy Statement

It is the policy of TAS to actively respond in any situation where a student verbally or behaviorally indicates an intent to attempt suicide or to do physical harm to himself/herself.

As such, TAS shall:

1. Provide annual training in suicide awareness and prevention to all certificated school personnel within the framework of existing in-service training programs offered by the Georgia Department of Education or as part of required professional development in accordance with state laws and rules established by the Georgia Department of Education.
2. Establish a youth suicide prevention program that includes prevention, intervention, and postvention:

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- a. Identify risk factors for youth suicide (prevention)
- b. Establish procedures to intervene with such youth (intervention)
- c. Identify referral services and resources (postvention)
- d. Identify resources and establish training for school personnel (training)
- e. Identify resources for education of students regarding suicide and suicide prevention.

### **Guidelines**

The Head of School, or his/her designee, will provide training to the staff and shall use resources from the Georgia Department of Education which include a list of approved training materials that fulfill the requirements of O.C.G.A. §20-2-779.1. The designated person delivering the training may include any other training materials currently being used by the school if such training materials meet the criteria established by the GaDOE.

Approved materials shall include training on how to identify appropriate mental health services, both within the school and also within the larger community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services. Approved materials may include programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials.

In accordance with state law, no person shall have a cause of action for any loss or damage caused by any act or omission resulting from the implementation of this policy or its implementing procedures or resulting from any training, or lack thereof, required by state law or this policy. The training, or lack thereof, required by the provisions of state law shall not be construed to impose any specific duty of care. Neither the training nor the procedures are designed to impose ministerial duties but to provide a framework in which educators can exercise their professional judgment in the best interest of students.

### **TAS Nondiscrimination**

The Anchor School requires compliance with all discrimination laws, including but not limited to: Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Pregnancy Discrimination Act, Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Age Act), Age Discrimination and Employment Act (ADEA), Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

TAS believes that all students are entitled to equal educational opportunities regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, or any legally protected status. No student shall be subjected to discrimination or harassment because of the student's race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, or any legally protected status in any of TAS' education programs, activities, or practices. The board further recognizes its responsibility in accordance with applicable laws (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act) to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to benefit from and participate in

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all programs and activities of the school system. Additionally, sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. TAS is committed to upholding these laws and takes discriminatory behaviors seriously.

TAS has established both informal and formal procedures for resolving any complaints of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. Allegations of discrimination should be reported immediately to an administrator or counselor at the school.

A student may make a direct report to Dr. Josh Pinto Taylor at (404) 909-4555. The school administrator shall assist the student with formalizing and processing the complaint, which should include a statement of facts, identification of witnesses and any other information necessary to fully describe the matter. Formal complaints should be filed within 30 calendar days of the alleged incident.

All inquiries and discrimination complaints filed with the Head of School (except in extenuating circumstances) are confidential to the fullest extent possible. Confidentiality also applies to the investigative process of all investigations conducted by the Head of School. All school personnel who have knowledge of the occurrence of discrimination should immediately make an appropriate report of the alleged misconduct to the appropriate Director or to the Head of School.

Students should note that it is unlawful for a student to falsify, misrepresent, omit, or erroneously report information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee, including during off-school hours.

## **TEACHER CODE OF CONDUCT**

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The Anchor School has created a staff handbook which outlines the teacher code of conduct in more detail. It is important for you, as families, to know that teachers at The Anchor School are expected to know and love their (1) students, (2) content, and (3) context. TAS provides ongoing professional development to ensure teachers are demonstrating these characteristics.

### **Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct by TAS Employee**

In accordance with the requirements found in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.7, TAS complies with the Professional Standards Commission's state mandated process for students to follow when reporting instances of alleged inappropriate sexual behavior by a school employee.

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 the School.

Any teacher, counselor, or administrator receiving such a report shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the Head of School and shall submit a written report of the incident to the Head of School within 24 hours. If the Head of School is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Governing Board and State Charter Schools Commission.

The Head of School who receives a report of 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

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report to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to the appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of 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 the School. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the Head of School shall make an immediate written report to the Governing Board, State Charter Schools Commission and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

"Sexual abuse" means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any sexual act as defined in O.C.G.A. 197-5.

"Sexual misconduct" includes behavior by an educator that is directed at a student and intended to sexually arouse or titillate the educator or the child. Educator sexual misconduct by an educator may include, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

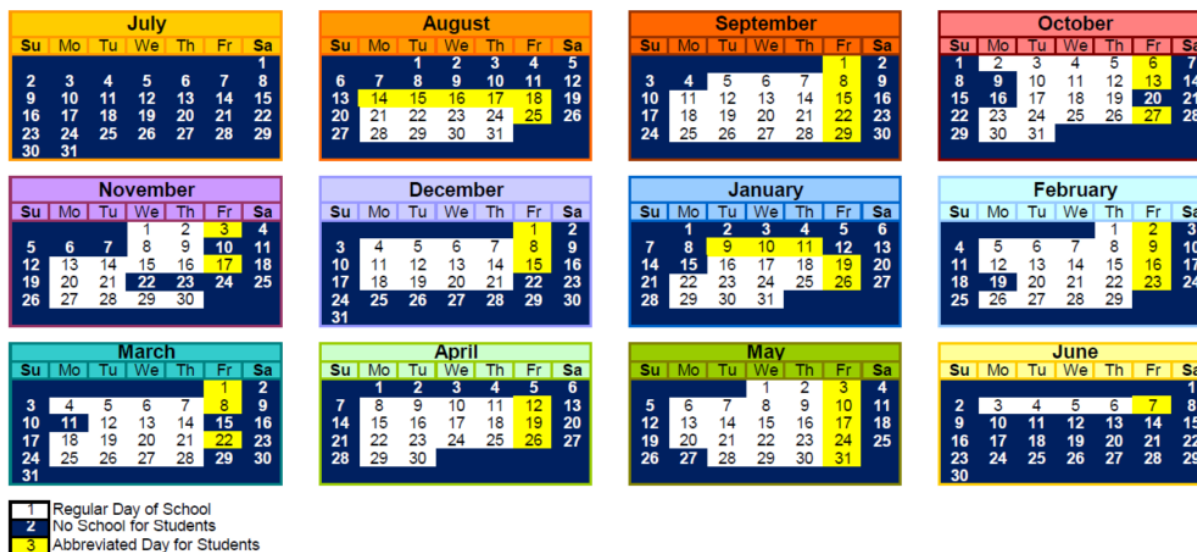
1. Making sexual comments, jokes, or gestures.
2. Showing or displaying sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations, or messages.
3. Writing sexual messages/graffiti on notes or the internet.
4. Spreading sexual rumors.
5. Spying on students as they dress, shower, or use the restroom at school.
6. Flashing or "mooning" students.
7. Touching, excessively hugging, or grabbing students in a sexual way.
8. Forcing a student to kiss him/her or do something else of a sexual nature.
9. Talking or asking about a student's developing body, sexuality, dating habits, etc.
10. Talking repeatedly about sexual activities or sexual fantasies.
11. Making fun of your body parts.
12. Calling students sexual names.



## SCHOOL CALENDAR

The Anchor School has an academic calendar which supports student and staff development throughout the year. The image below provides an overview of the calendar and a legend to help families interpret when we are in and out of school.

### 2023-2024



## ACADEMIC PROGRAM

TAS curriculum will be developed from a combination of in-house resources and vendor-created resources. Wherever TAS can find high-quality and affordable curricular materials that are aligned with Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), TAS uses those materials as the foundation for our learning experiences. For the content that makes our school program truly unique (place-based projects, advisory, personalized learning, etc.) TAS builds content in-house to align with GSE and our proposed scope and sequence.

No matter how the content is created, TAS ensures curriculum materials are grade-level appropriate, aligned to GSE, personalized to be made accessible to all learners, grounded in truth, and supported by evidence. TAS teachers will do the necessary work to ensure all lesson materials are in alignment with GSE and the corresponding GaDOE curriculum map for the course they teach with enough time to allow their instructional coach to review their work for rigor, alignment, personalization, and accuracy. Alignment to GSE is checked by the Head of School, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and Associate Director of Curriculum & Instruction. Alignment is confirmed annually (prior to curriculum adoption) and weekly (after lesson materials are created by the teacher).

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

**MATH** – For 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade Math courses TAS adopts the free Eureka open-source curriculum. Research has shown that Eureka Math offers a level of rigor, coherence, and focus that builds deep conceptual understanding<sup>viii</sup>.

**ELA** – For 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA courses TAS adopts the free EL Education open-source curriculum. Research has shown that EL Education offers a level of rigor, coherence, and focus that builds background knowledge through reading, promotes discovery through research, and fosters creativity through writing<sup>ix</sup>.

**SCIENCE** – For 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science TAS adopts the Amplify curriculum. Research has shown that Amplify offers a level of rigor, coherence, and focus that sheds light on natural phenomena in ways that are engaging and mirror how scientists make discoveries in the universe<sup>x</sup>.

**HUMANITIES** – For 8<sup>th</sup> grade Humanities TAS adopts free open-source materials from Achievement First. This set of materials is designed to set students up for success in AP and other college-level humanities courses in high school.

**PROJECTS** – For 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade place-based project courses TAS creates the curriculum in a strategic partnership between our project lead teachers, principals, head of school, and community partners. These semester-long project-based learning courses require our project lead teachers to blend their knowledge of our students, their content expertise, and their knowledge of the city of Atlanta into a meaningful and engaging longitudinal project. These courses will align to Georgia Standards of Excellence in the fields of Math, Science, ELA, and Humanities.

**PE** – For 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade PE courses TAS designs the curriculum using the corresponding GaDOE curriculum map. The PE curriculum is designed to align with Georgia Performance Standards and National Physical Education Standards. The personal and community health courses are also designed with ELA standards of excellence in mind – as they present meaningful opportunities to practice reading, writing, and oral communication.

**MODERN LANGUAGE** – For 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish courses TAS uses the STAMP assessment for diagnosing language proficiency. Each course is designed to support the various levels of proficiency in the middle school population. All courses are designed to align with Georgia standards of excellence for high school level Spanish so students can begin earning modern language credits in middle school if they would like. TAS designs the curriculum using the corresponding GaDOE curriculum maps.

**SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION (SGI)** – For 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade SGI sections TAS follows our MTSS process of student identification, intervention design, monitoring, and evaluation. These materials are created in-house in response to the targeted intervention area defined for each group of students. TAS uses EL Education, Eureka, and Lifelong Readers curriculum materials as the foundational resources. TAS modifies materials in this setting to meet the developmental needs of the student group they intend to serve. This aspect of the curriculum requires some alignment to standards in lower grades to ensure students are working in their zone of proximal development.

**ADVISORY** – For 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade Advisory sections TAS adopts nXu curriculum (Years 1-3) and Valor Compass Circles (Years 4-5) as innovative and proven approaches to develop empathy,

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communication skills, social intelligence, and emotional intelligence. The work produced in advisory allows students time for introspection and identity development. The work produced in this setting also serves as a foundation for building community, relationships, trust, and empathy. The circles framework also normalizes our use of circle-based protocols in other spaces (restorative circles, micro-village circles, etc.).

**HOMEWORK:** Homework is a vital part of our program at TAS. It requires support from families and strengthens the tie between the school environment and the home environment. The homework philosophy at TAS is that all homework should either be preparation for an upcoming lesson or practice from a previous lesson. The National Education Association recommends 10 minutes of homework per night per grade-level. Accordingly, The Anchor School will assign approximately 60 minutes of homework per night for 6<sup>th</sup> graders, and then increases that number by 10 minutes for each new grade-level. By 12<sup>th</sup> grade, families can expect approximately two hours per night of homework. Homework assigned as practice can be made up. Homework assigned as preparation for an upcoming lesson cannot be made up.

**INDEPENDENT READING:** The Anchor School provides books to all students for independent reading time in school and at home. Research shows that the #1 way to improve a scholar's reading skills is to have them read. Scholars who read outside of school are the strongest readers and score the highest on reading tests. Supporting your scholar's independent reading at home is the best way to help them improve their speed, accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills while reading. It is especially helpful for families to ask their scholars to read out loud and stop them occasionally to have the scholar summarize what they just read. Asking simple comprehension questions as your scholar reads to you is one of the highest impact ways you can support our work at home.

**MISSED WORK:** After returning from an absence, scholars are expected to complete any missed assignments in a timely manner. Teachers are expected to support scholars and families in this process. The parent is expected to help the scholar check on missed assignments, and to complete any missed work. In the event of a planned absence, parents should notify the school prior to the absence so the teachers can prepare the work in advance for completion during the planned absence.

**ENRICHMENT:** The Anchor School creates enrichment program opportunities before and after school. The before school programs run from 7:30-8:25 a.m. The after school programs run from 4:00-5:25 p.m.

**MICRO-VILLAGE CONFERENCES & LOOPING ADVISORS:** Every student at TAS, with the support of their family, identifies 3-5 adults, in addition to their looping advisor, to meet with them quarterly, review progress, plan for success, and set concrete goals for social, emotional, behavioral, academic, and physical development moving forward. This group of people is called a "micro-village" – built on the idea that it takes a village to raise a child. Imagine a team of caring adults coming together each quarter to support a student and to partner with them towards a plan that compliments their purpose and passion. TAS organizes each micro-village meeting – an effort requiring tremendous coordination. To make this possible, TAS has dedicated time in the annual calendar for these meetings.

The TAS staffing model and bell schedule allows advisors to have a mixed-gender cohort of 12-15 students who they advise for the duration of middle school or high school. This longitudinal

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relationship is important because it creates a level of personalized communication with families. Advisors are a required member of every micro-village. Advisors manage a caseload of 12-15 individualized learning and graduation plans. Looping advisors is important because this structure increases the relational connection between the school and the family and makes feedback about the student more holistic and personalized. Furthermore, this structure supports our counseling efforts in high school because the advisor reminds students and families about school promotion and graduation requirements in each of these micro-village meetings.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS & SPECIAL EDUCATION:** The Anchor School believes that all children, regardless of English Language Proficiency or Special Education needs, can learn and achieve at high levels. Therefore, The Anchor School has structured its program to provide resources for special education scholars and to ensure that all scholars with limited English proficiency (ELL) will be proficient readers, writers, and speakers of English within two years of inclusion in our school programming. The Anchor School is equally committed to those scholars with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Scholars who are mandated to receive Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Special Education Teacher Support Services, or counseling will receive all services through coordinated efforts between the school and the family. These topics are described in more detail below.

**EXISTING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES:** Any student with an IEP or 504 plan will receive all appropriate services through Special Education-certified staff and contracted vendors. TAS will serve students on the full continuum of services required by mild, moderate, and severe disabilities. Students will be served through the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible. When families enroll, the school will ask about IEP/504 plans in their enrollment packets, as well as check the State Longitudinal Data System to confirm any pre-existing plans.

**NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATIONS:** Any time a parent/guardian requests an evaluation, or TAS suspects a disability, the student would be recommended for evaluation, regardless of whether or not the student is receiving Multi-Tiered System of Supports (“MTSS”) interventions. Additionally, for students in Tier 3 of MTSS that do not show progress, TAS will recommend a Special Education evaluation. Under Georgia SBOE Rule 160-4-7.09-6, TAS will communicate the recommendation for evaluation to parent(s)/guardian(s) for them to consent to or decline testing through a meeting and parental consent to evaluation (PCE) form. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) declines evaluation, the student will remain in Tier 3 MTSS support. Special Education evaluations will be conducted by a licensed psychologist through a contracted vendor. The initial evaluation must include at least two measures of cognitive intelligence and intelligence-based testing. Students will be tested in all areas of suspected disability.

After an evaluation, the results will be shared with the IEP team (parent(s)/guardian(s), classroom teacher, Special Education teacher, and Head of School) at the eligibility meeting. Parent(s)/guardian(s) participation is critical in the determination of eligibility for special education and in the development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP - see below). Every reasonable effort will be made to schedule meetings such that parent(s)/guardian(s) have the opportunity to participate. Parents may also participate by phone if unable to attend the meeting. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are welcome to invite others to attend the meeting. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should notify the school at least three (3) school days in advance of the meeting the name(s) and role(s) (i.e.,

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family, friend, advocate, attorney) of each individual that will be attending the meeting at their invitation.

**ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION:** In order to be eligible for special education services, a student must meet all of the following criteria:

1. The student has a disability, as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”)
2. Due to the disability, the student is not making effective progress in the general education program
3. The student requires specifically designed instruction or related services (examples include occupational therapy, speech therapy, or physical therapy)

Students with disabilities requiring specialized support may qualify for a support plan under either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or an IEP under the IDEA. An IEP must include present levels, goals with input from classroom data and the child’s teacher(s), special educator(s), external evaluation results, the family, Behavior Improvement Plan (BIP – as needed), and any related services. After IEP/504 creation, all modifications and accommodations will be implemented by school personnel and, as appropriate, contracted service providers.

**INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS (IEPs):** The IEP is a legal document that identifies the services and accommodations that are necessary for students to make effective progress.

An IEP is reviewed every year by a team that includes the student’s teachers, any specialists involved in the student’s education, the parent, anyone the parent invites, and the student if the student is of an appropriate age to participate.

**504 ACCOMMODATION PLANS:** Upon completion of an evaluation, a 504 Accommodation Plan may be developed for a qualified student with a disability which “substantially limits one or more major life activities,” such as learning and who requires accommodations in order to access the general education curriculum. A 504 Plan is a legal document, which is primarily a classroom accommodation plan. It is not an IEP.

**RELATED SERVICES:** Sometimes students with disabilities may need support in areas other than just instruction. For example, if a student has been evaluated and determined to have challenges with speech, then that student should also work with a speech therapist to help them develop important skills for communicating within school. This type of service is called a related service and is provided by a specialist who is trained in a specific area (for example, a speech therapist rather than a classroom teacher). TAS works with external contracts to provide different related services, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, counseling, and paraprofessional support.

**MANIFESTATION HEARING:** In cases where a student with an IEP or 504 plan has a long-term suspension (more than 10 days at once or cumulatively throughout the year), our school will follow the manifestation meeting protocols outlined in the IDEA law. A team of family members, teacher, special educator, Head of School, and any other involved staff will convene for the manifestation hearing. The team will analyze antecedents, perceived motives, reactions, and outcomes of the



behavior resulting in the disciplinary infractions, to determine the answers to two questions: “Was the behavior caused by or directly and substantially related to the child’s disability? Was the behavior a direct result of the school’s failure to implement the child’s IEP?” If the behavior was a result of the student’s disability or the school’s failure to implement the student’s IEP, then the behavior was a manifestation. No further disciplinary actions may be taken, and the school will evaluate improvements to support plans and implementation. If the behavior was not a manifestation, the need for a functional behavioral assessment and a behavioral intervention plan should be considered to prevent the behavior from recurring

**DISPUTES:** TAS will make every effort to resolve any concerns from families through IEP team meetings to make the best decision for our students. Please note, parent(s)/guardian(s) always have the right to file complaints regarding special education in accordance with O.C.G.A § 20-2-1160 directly with the State Department of Education, the Office of Civil Rights, or filing an administrative complaint. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive a copy of their parental rights at the beginning of every special education meeting, which will detail the right parent(s)/guardian(s) to file complaints.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER SERVICES:** TAS will identify students learning English and deliver programming to ensure student success in accordance with Georgia SBOE Rule 160-4-6-.02. All students will be placed in general education classrooms and taught in English.

## **Enrollment**

All information will be provided to families in a language that the parents understand. Upon enrollment at TAS, all families will complete the Home Language Survey. The Home Language Survey is used to determine whether a language other than English is used in the student’s home and is not used to determine a student’s language classification or immigration status. The information provided on the Home Language Survey is kept in the student’s cumulative record. The Home Language Survey consists of three questions 1) Which language does your child best understand and speak? 2) Which language does your child most frequently speak at home? 3) Which language do adults in your home most frequently use when speaking with your child? If the answers to all questions on the Home Language Survey are “English”, then no further action is taken. If there is evidence of significant non-English exposure, then the pupil must be assessed for ELL status.

## **English Language Learner Identification**

For all families that indicate a language other than English is spoken in the home on the home language survey, students will be assessed using the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 to determine English language proficiency levels in the domains of speaking, listening, reading and writing within two weeks of enrollment. TAS will utilize qualified staff or external evaluation vendor to conduct assessments.

## **English Language Learner Programming**

The results of the assessment and the programming plan will be communicated with families in their preferred language, as indicated on the home language survey. If a student is identified as ELL, they will be provided with Sheltered English Immersion instruction – Sheltered Content Instruction and/or Direct ESL instruction depending on the ACCESS data. This instruction will be provided during our 70-minute literacy rotations model.

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## **Progress Monitoring**

TAS will utilize the WIDA suite to monitor progress and adjust appropriate instruction, accommodations, and modifications to ensure student progress. Students will be exited from the ELL program when indicated by ACCESS exam scores or general education assessments indicate language proficiency. Upon exiting the ELL program, students will be monitored with ACCESS for two years, and will be provided services again if regression is measured.

Students whose primary language is not English have equal rights of access to all academic and non-academic components of the TAS experience.

**HOMELESS STUDENT SERVICES:** In accordance with the Education for Homeless Children and Youths: Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) TAS adheres to the principle that all eligible children and youth, including the homeless, are entitled to a free, appropriate public education.

Students identified as homeless or “in transition” will be given full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards and will be included in state and district wide assessments and accountability systems. Our school will ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment. Homeless students will be provided all district services for which they are eligible, including limited English proficiency, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, and after school programs where applicable.

## **Definitions**

In accordance with the Act and SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.28, the term “homeless child and youth” is defined as individual who lack a fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason.
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
3. Who are living in emergency shelters.
4. Who are abandoned in hospitals or are awaiting foster care placement.
5. Whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation.
6. Who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, or substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
7. Migratory students who qualify as homeless because the children are living in any of the above described circumstances.
8. Unaccompanied and are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

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- A child shall be considered to be experiencing homelessness for as long as he or she is in a living situation as described above.
- “Unaccompanied youth” means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who is in transition as defined above.
- “Immediate” means without delay
- “School of origin” means the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

## **Identification**

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the school’s homeless liaison will identify children and youth experiencing homelessness within our school. The liaison will train school personnel on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth as experiencing homelessness, and procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the liaison. The liaison will also instruct school registrars and secretaries to inquire about possible homelessness upon the enrollment and withdrawal of every student and to forward information indicating homelessness to the liaison. Community partners in identification may include: family and youth shelters, soup kitchens, motels, campgrounds, drop-in centers welfare departments and other local social services agencies, faith based organizations, truancy and attendance officers, local homeless coalitions, and legal services.

## **Admission of Homeless Students**

Students are immediately admitted to TAS even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation. TAS will make all efforts to update and keep these records current. Unaccompanied youth must also be immediately enrolled in school. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or TAS’s homeless liaison.

## **Education of Homeless Students**

All students, including those students who are homeless or in transition have a full and equal opportunity at TAS. Parents and guardians of homeless students are informed of the educationally related opportunities available to their children and are provided with the opportunities to participate in the education of their children. Homeless families and students will receive educational services for which all students are eligible. Referrals to health care and immunization services, dental services, health services, and other appropriate services will be made available to all families and students.

## **Disputes and Resolution of Complaints**

Any complaints will be submitted in writing to the Governing Board who will resolve the issue. The parent and the student will be given every opportunity to participate meaningfully in the resolution of the dispute. The district liaison will keep records of all disputes in order to determine whether particular issues are delaying or denying the enrollment of homeless children and youth repeatedly.

## **Program Procedures**

1. TAS is responsible for identifying a homeless liaison.

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2. Homeless students will be identified based on the definition prescribed by McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and via a numeric code in the school's student information system. All staff in the school will be trained in the identification and recruitment of homeless students.
3. The homeless liaison will provide annual training for all school staff having contact with homeless students.
4. School leadership will receive annual training on the identification and needs of homeless students.
5. The school will display flyers, brochures, and posters that identify the Homeless Liaison contact information.
6. Services for homeless students will be evaluated based on student academic achievement.

### **Enrollment/Withdrawal**

Enrollment of homeless students occurs at the appropriate grade level. School Operations team is trained and attentive to the identification of homeless students during the enrollment process. Any identification of a homeless student/ family will be immediately identified to the Homeless Liaison for investigation. If TAS is contacted by another school for a homeless student's records, requested information will be provided and sent to the requesting school district within 10 days of receiving the request.

### **Program Training and Information Dissemination**

The Homeless Liaison or designee annually conducts training and sensitivity/awareness activities each fall to heighten the awareness of the following personnel of the specific needs of unaccompanied and homeless youth: school leadership, teachers, and support personnel. Homeless liaison will lead and coordinate the schools' compliance with this policy and will receive training annually. Meeting documentation includes the PowerPoint presentation, agenda, and sign-in sheets. The Homeless Liaison or designee distributes posters and brochures in throughout the school and in the lobby. Posters and brochures are also distributed to the community throughout the year at various locations including but not limited to the following: Department of Family and Children's Services, Community Centers, Local Churches, Health Department, Fire Department, Hospital, Soup Kitchen, Local Law Enforcement, Safe Haven, and Local Doctor Offices.

### **Transportation**

TAS will put into place a transportation plan for any identified homeless students (e.g. existing busing route, MARTA cards, or other supports).

### **Academic Credit**

A student's homeless status shall not be a barrier to receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.

### **Disputes (Complaint Procedures)**

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Any individual, organization, or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with TAS if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges that TAS is violating a federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Title I, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing. All complaints should be directed to the Head of School.

## **NUTRITION & WELLNESS PROGRAM**

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**HEALTH CLINIC:** The Anchor School employs a team of nurses and social workers to staff a school-based health clinic. This team of licensed health professionals is available to support students with medical needs throughout the school day. The goal of the school-based health clinic is to increase access to primary care and preventative medical services and to reduce the number of hours students need to miss school to visit healthcare providers outside of our school facility.

**MEDICAL RECORDS & HEALTH SERVICES:** The Anchor School will have services provided by our certified nurses and social workers. Parents must complete forms giving TAS permission to administer health care to their child. The clinic checks all health records and ensures that each scholar is properly immunized. If your scholar requires medication during school hours, TAS will assist by administering medication. However, medication may not be given without completion of the Administration of Medication Form. This policy applies to all medicine, including over the counter medications like aspirin or Tylenol.

**REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS:** State law requires that all children in elementary, middle, and high school must have an updated Georgia Certificate of Immunization.

Immunizations are required for measles, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, polio, mumps, whooping cough and hepatitis B. The Georgia DHR Form 3231 and Certificate of Immunization must be used for students in grades K-12. A local health department computer-generated form is acceptable. Georgia law allows for two types of exemptions from the immunization requirements: medical and religious. Each child must have one of two items on file – either a valid Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231) indicating a medical exemption or a signed, notarized statement, which is called an affidavit of religious exemption.

For entrance into the sixth grade, each student must have at least one additional dose of MMR vaccine.

For entrance into the seventh grade, each student entering or transferring into TAS, must receive a tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough) booster vaccination (Tdap) and an adolescent meningococcal vaccination (MCV4).

For entrance into the eighth through twelfth grade, any student new to Georgia must receive a tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough) booster vaccination (Tdap) and an adolescent meningococcal vaccination (MCV4).

**DIABETES MEDICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN:** As part of TAS’s student health services program and in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-779, the Head of School is responsible for





designating at least two employees to serve as trained diabetes personnel when a student with diabetes is enrolled in the school, when appropriate.

The Head of School shall develop rules and procedures for the implementation of any diabetes medical management plan submitted by any parent/guardian of a student with diabetes who seeks care while at school or school-sponsored activities.

A student who has been diagnosed with diabetes must have a [Diabetes Medical Management Plan](#) (DMMP), signed by a parent/guardian and physician, on file with the school to receive or administer the related medication or treatment while at school or school-sponsored activities. The DMMP must contain all items covered in the plan, including how, when, and under what circumstances the student should receive blood glucose monitoring and injections of insulin as well as steps to take in case of an emergency.

Upon written request by a parent/guardian and if authorized by a student's DMMP, a student with diabetes shall be permitted to perform blood glucose checks, administer insulin through the insulin delivery system the student uses, treat hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia, and otherwise attend to the monitoring and treatment of his or her diabetes in the classroom, in any area of the school or school grounds, and at any school related activity, and he or she shall be permitted to possess on his or her person at all times all necessary supplies and equipment to perform such monitoring and treatment functions

**MEAL PROGRAM:** Breakfast and lunch will be available at The Anchor School each day of school programming. Families must complete lunch forms in August or September to participate in the school food program, or within two weeks of enrollment if enrolling after the start of the academic year. In order to create the best learning environment possible, and to enhance the overall health and well being of our scholars, we ask that families only send nutritious food and drinks to school. A list of recommended and unrecommended food and beverage items will be provided during orientation. If you choose not to participate in the meal program, all beverages brought from home must be in clear plastic bottles or containers.

**HEALTH & FITNESS PROGRAM:** Personal health and fitness development is an important part of holistic adolescent development. Accordingly, students will be enrolled in a health, fitness, or physical education course every year. A variety of course offerings exist – and there are requirements for graduation from The Anchor School and any school in the state of Georgia. The uniform section above outlines the basic expectations for athletic wear and PE uniforms at The Anchor School.

**SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST TRAINING:** In accordance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-324.5, TAS shall hold information meetings twice per year regarding the symptoms and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest. At such informational meeting, an info sheet on sudden cardiac arrest symptoms and warning signs shall be provided to each student's parent or guardian. For purposes of the statute, "student" is defined as being in grades 6-12.

**VISION, HEARING, DENTAL, & NUTRITION SCREENING:** The parent or guardian of a child being admitted for the first time to a public school shall furnish to the school a properly executed Department of Public Health Form 3300: Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental and

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**Nutrition Screening.** The screenings reported on the certificate shall have been conducted within one year prior to the time that the child is admitted for the first time to a public school. Any child admitted to a public school without a Certificate shall present a Certificate within three months following admission. When a child transfers to another school within Georgia, the Certificate and any related follow-up documentation must be forwarded to the new school.

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:** If there is reasonable cause to believe that an individual has become infected with a communicable disease, the determination of the individual's condition shall be based on reasonable judgment, after consultation with the school nurse and based on the following criteria: the nature of the risk, i.e, how the disease is transmitted; the duration of the risk, i.e., how long the carrier is infectious; the severity of the risk, i.e., the degree of potential harm to third parties; and the probability that the disease will be transmitted and will cause varying degrees of harm. If after consideration of these criteria it is determined that the individual does not present a significant risk of contagion, the individual may remain at the school. If it is determined that the individual does present a significant risk of contagion, the individual should be sent home and the below reporting procedure shall be followed.

#### **Reporting Procedure:**

A confirmed communicable disease case should be reported to the Head of School or School Nurse.

The School Nurse will complete the Communicable Disease Incident Form and fax it to the DeKalb County Health District (DCHD), which will provide guidance for communicable disease cases that require management beyond the local school level.

TAS will follow the guidance provided by DCHD for areas such as mass notification, school closure, prophylactic treatment, etc., as well as all communicable disease cases that require management beyond the local school level.

## **SCHOOL OPERATIONS & LOGISTICS**

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**STUDENT RECORDS:** The Anchor School will make available to parents any records on file regarding their scholar to which they are legally entitled. If parents or legal guardians wish to examine their scholar's record, they should submit a request in writing to the Director of School Operations. The parent will be allowed to inspect the file and may request copies, which will be provided as soon as practicable, and in accordance with any applicable laws. There are two different types of student records, which will be treated differently. Directory information is demographical information about the student such as name, address, telephone number, date of birth, participation in activities, awards received, etc. This information may be made available to others for specific use without the consent of the parent or legal guardian. Confidential records, on the other hand, include grades, evaluations, disciplinary actions, and health records. Confidential records will not be made available to any non-school personnel without written consent from the parent or legal guardian. PLEASE NOTIFY THE MAIN OFFICE OF ANY CHANGES IN YOUR SCHOLAR'S CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THEIR SAFETY.



**SCHOOL VISITOR POLICY:** The Anchor School welcomes families as volunteers, observers, and partners in the education of their scholars. All visitors must sign in at the main office and obtain a visitors' badge. To minimize any disruption in learning, we ask visitors to do the following:

- Upon arriving, all visitors must sign in at the main office and obtain a visitors' badge.
- Unannounced classroom visits are not permitted because it can be disrupted to the class.
- Family members who would like to visit the school's classrooms for an extended time must plan and schedule the event at least one day in advance.
- Family members who would like to volunteer at the school must contact the school to coordinate the volunteer work.

**LOST & FOUND:** Families may come in any school day between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to search the lost and found box located and secured by the office coordinator. At several times in the school year, unclaimed items left in the box will be donated to a local charity.

**SCHOOL CLOSURES:** The Anchor School follows weather-related closures and delays in DeKalb County Public Schools. Families are encouraged to watch the news, call the school, or check the school website and social media channels to find out if school is closed or delayed for opening.

## **TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS**

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TAS is committed to developing a set of transportation options aimed at helping students in our school have a safe trip to and from school each day. The primary options for students are: walking, public transportation, family drop-off and pick-up, or riding a school-provided bus.

TAS transportation policy states that all students who live 1.5 miles or less from the school are expected to walk to/from school or be dropped off and picked up from school each day. The map below outlines the walker zone – defined by a 1.5-mile radius from the primary facility location.

The facility also has ample room for a drop-off and pick-up zone. The details of the drop-off and pick-up plans will be communicated in the orientation materials. Families from all zip codes are permitted to drop off and pick up their students every day.

### **Public Transportation**

Our facility is near multiple public transportation options – making public transportation another option for families to consider. Families from any county in metro Atlanta could, theoretically, connect to the primary facility via MARTA.

### **TAS Bus Plan**

TAS has budgeted for free school busing services for approximately 50% of the middle school student population. While charter schools are not required to provide transportation, TAS believes it is important to offer these services given the desire to serve students across the metro Atlanta region. TAS believes that many students will live within the required walking or drop-off and pick-

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up zone and some other students will be dropped-off or picked-up by parents each day. Adolescents are approaching an age of responsibility and independence when public transportation can be a feasible option for some families. Should demand exceed supply, TAS will conduct a random lottery of all interested students to determine which students are eligible for limited bus seats.

The table below outlines a set of bus routes that are planned for families who choose to use TAS buses.

Satellite Location	Estimated Time	Bus Seats
4919 Flat Shoals Parkway, Decatur, GA 30034	7:00 a.m. departure	0
4060 Covington Highway, Decatur, GA 30032	7:22 a.m. departure	10
5211 Memorial Drive, Stone Mountain, Ga 30088	7:35 a.m. departure	20
6512 Covington Highway, Lithonia, GA 30058	7:55 a.m. departure	30
8424 Mall Parkway, Stonecrest, GA 30038	8:10 a.m. departure	50
2460 Wesley Chapel Road, Decatur, GA 30035	8:25 a.m. arrival	70

The same route and stops will be used for the end of each school day.

Satellite Location	Estimated Time	Bus Seats
2460 Wesley Chapel Road, Decatur, GA 30035	4:05 p.m. departure	70
8424 Mall Parkway, Stonecrest, GA 30038	4:22 p.m. departure	50
6512 Covington Highway, Lithonia, GA 30058	4:38 p.m. departure	30
5211 Memorial Drive, Stone Mountain, Ga 30088	5:05 p.m. departure	20
4060 Covington Highway, Decatur, GA 30032	5:25 p.m. departure	10
4919 Flat Shoals Parkway, Decatur, GA 30034	5:46 p.m. departure	0

**BUS BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:** The school bus is an extension of our school and our community values. Families will be given bus rules prior to starting bus services. Our bus rules are designed to ensure scholars have a safe trip to and from school – and to ensure that parents pick up scholars on time so that scholars are home on time. Bus drivers must focus on the road to ensure that all students arrive to school and home safely. We attempt to have bus chaperones on each bus in both directions whenever possible. Bus chaperones are employed by the school. However, the vast majority of schools do not have such arrangements, and we cannot guarantee that our buses will have this service every day. Three important notes on bus behavior:

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- The code of conduct listed above applies to riding the bus and waiting for the bus at bus stops.
- Scholars must remain in their seats, talk quietly, and follow the directions of the driver to ensure their safety.
- Inappropriate conduct on the bus may result in suspension from, or loss of, transportation services.

If your scholar is suspended from the school-provided bus, you are responsible for obtaining transportation.

#### **TAS Bus Plan – Students with Disabilities or Living in Transitional Housing**

TAS may also provide at least one micro-bus with a ramp system to transport students with disabilities or students living in various stages of transitional housing who qualify for such services under McKinney Vento. The details of this plan will be shared during orientation with families who have children that qualify for these services.

### **CO-DESIGN TEAM**

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Each year, our school forms a co-design team which is responsible for working with the school to continue to improve the school culture, climate, and programming for all of our students. The co-design team is a group of 10-12 parents, community members, and staff who work together to identify an issue in our school community, understand the root of the problem, research potential solutions, and propose a set of recommendations to the Head of School and Board of Directors.

Members of the co-design team receive a stipend for their 12-month commitment. Family members who are interested in supporting the continuous improvement of our school through membership on this team should contact us to state their interest. A formal selection process, including a background check and the completion of a conflict of interest form, is required for full participation.

### **NOTICES**

#### **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT NOTICE (“FERPA”)**

FERPA affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

- (1) The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school Head of School a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The Head of School will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- (2) The right to request the amendment of the student’s education record that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask TAS to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school Head

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of School, and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures can be found in code of conduct.

(3) The right to provide written consent before the School discloses personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Education; a school or Board of Directors approved volunteer; a person or company that is under the direct control of the School with respect to the use and maintenance of education records and with whom the School has contracted or who volunteers to perform a service or function for which the School would otherwise use employees (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, insurance adjuster); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses educational records, without consent, to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8520.

(5) The School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the School to the contrary in accordance with School procedures. Disclosures of "directory information" relating to individual students will be made under limited circumstances without the written consent of the parent, legal guardian or eligible student. These circumstances include when directory information is posted in schools such as on displayed student work; when printed in school or district publications such as graduation programs, yearbooks or school playbills; in district communications for student recognition or information; when disclosed to the United States military; law enforcement entities; welfare agencies; colleges, universities and other postsecondary institutions; studentship-granting organizations; and other entities as approved by the Head of School or his/her designee.

Directory information is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. The School has designated the following information as "Directory



Information”: student or parent/guardian name(s); student or parent/guardian address(es); student or parent/guardian telephone listing(s); email address for student and/or parent/guardian; photograph or image of the student; student’s date and place of birth; student grade level; student participation in officially recognized clubs and athletic activities; student weight and height, if the student participates in an athletic activity; dates of attendance in Atlanta Unbound Academy; enrollment status; most recent educational agency or institution attended; and degrees, honors, and awards received.

The School records and maintains audio recordings and video or photographic footage and audio recordings of students on school property and at school events in locations including, but not limited to, parking lots, school buses, lunchrooms, classrooms and hallways. Such information is used and maintained for security and other informational purposes, including yearbooks, video yearbooks, school publications, school/district websites and district/school social media such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook. In many cases, recordings or photographs contain directory or peripheral video or photographic footage of students engaged in day-to-day activities including, but not limited to, walking to class and attending classroom or participating in school/district activities. The School or School designees may crop, edit, or treat the photograph, video, or audio clip at its discretion.

Peripheral video footage, photographic images, or audio recordings of day -to-day student activities do not include footage of a student or students committing, being involved in, or witnessing a violation of law or School or school rule, procedure, or policy. The School may also determine that other activities do not qualify as peripheral images, footage, or recordings on case-by-case basis.

You have the right to limit or refuse the disclosure of “Directory Information”. If you do not want the School to disclose any or all of the above information as Directory Information, you must notify the Head of School in writing within 10 days of receipt of this notice/handbook to opt out of having your child’s information included as Directory Information. The written notice must:

(1) include the name of the student; (2) include a statement that the parent/guardian or eligible student is opting out of the disclosure of Directory Information under FERPA; and (3) be signed and dated by the parent, guardian, or eligible student (a student age 18 or older).

Please note that your written notice will be effective for the current year only and must be renewed on an annual basis should you wish to continue to opt out of the release of Directory Information.

Each school is to keep any opt out provided in the student’s permanent record folder and a copy should be forwarded by school mail to Atlanta Unbound Academy: Attn: Director of Operations and Head of School.

### **PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents of elementary and secondary students certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

These include, but are not limited to, the right to:





Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) –

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others. (This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.)

Inspect, upon request and before administration or use –

1. Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

TAS will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. TAS will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each





school year and after any substantive changes. TAS will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. TAS will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if it has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and will be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this direct notification requirement:

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- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
  - Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
  - Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.
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Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office - U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202.

### **PARENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW**

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act statute, TAS informs parents that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s). The following information may be requested:

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- whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
  - whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
  - the college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;
  - whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.
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If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's qualification, please contact the principal.

### **ASBESTOS HAZARD EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACT (AHERA) NOTICE**

This is to give notice that TAS has updated the AHERA asbestos management plan as required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of all public and private elementary and secondary schools in the United States, under Federal Law 40 CFR 763, Subpart E. TAS has met all AHERA requirements including this Annual Notice. The management plan is available for your review in the main office.

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## **PROTECT STUDENTS FIRST ACT COMPLAINT RESOLUTION POLICY**

In accordance with the requirements found in Georgia House Bill 1084, the Protect Students First Act (the “Act”), The Anchor School maintains the following Complaint Resolution Policy to set forth how eligible individuals may make complaints about TAS’s adherence to the requirements of the Act.

### **SECTION 1. Summary of the Protect Students First Act**

The Protect Students First Act, the full text of which is available at <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/61477>, requires TAS to prohibit its employees from discriminating against students and other employees based on race. Further, TAS must ensure that its curricula and training programs encourage employees and students to practice tolerance and mutual respect and to refrain from judging others based on race. In doing so, it shall not advocate for “divisive concepts,” a term further defined in the Act.

The Act is not intended to and shall not be construed or applied in practice to, among other things, inhibit or violate state and federal Constitutional rights, prohibit TAS from promoting tolerance, mutual respect, or cultural sensitivity or competence, or to ban the discussion of “divisive concepts” as part of a larger course of instruction in a professionally and academically appropriate manner without espousing personal political beliefs.

Further, the Act does not prohibit the use of curricula that addresses the topics of slavery, racial oppression, racial segregation, or racial discrimination, including topics relating to the enactment and enforcement of laws resulting in racial oppression, segregation, and discrimination in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs.

### **SECTION 2. Individuals Who May Make Complaints Under This Policy**

Only the following individuals shall be permitted to make a complaint under this Policy: the parent/guardian of a current TAS student; an TAS student who has reached the age of majority or is a lawfully emancipated minor; and any current TAS administrator, teacher, or other School personnel. An individual making a complaint under this Policy shall be referred to herein as a “Complainant”.

### **SECTION 3. Request for Records**

Any individual able to bring a complaint under this policy may also, before or in conjunction with bringing a complaint, make a written request to the Principal for access to nonconfidential records reasonably believed to substantiate a complaint made under the Act. The Principal shall produce such records for inspection within a reasonable amount of time not to exceed three school days from the date of the written request. In any instance where some or all of the requested documents are unavailable within three school days of receipt of the request, but such documents do exist, the Principal shall within three days provide the Complainant with a description of such records and a timeline for when they will be available shall provide the documents or access thereto as soon as practicable but in no case later than thirty days after receipt of the written request.

If the Principal denies a request for records or does not provide existing responsive records within thirty days, the requester may appeal such denial or failure to respond to the Board of Directors.

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The Board of Directors must place such appeal on the agenda for its next public meeting. If it is too late for such appeal to appear on the next meeting's agenda, the appeal must be included on the agenda for the subsequent meeting.

#### **SECTION 4. Complaint Procedures**

To initiate a complaint under this Policy, a Complainant shall submit to the Principal, in writing, a reasonably detailed description of the alleged violation of the Protecting Students First Act.

By way of example, a reasonably detailed description would generally include the date on which the alleged violation occurred, in which course or during what school-sponsored event the alleged violation occurred, the individual(s) accused of committing the alleged violation, any witnesses to the alleged violation, and details of the substance of the alleged violation (i.e., what remarks were made or what materials were presented that are objectionable).

#### **SECTION 5. Investigation of Complaints**

Within five school days of receiving a written complaint, the Principal or his/her designee shall review the complaint and take reasonable steps to investigate its allegations. What is considered "reasonable" will vary based on the details of the Complaint, but generally will involve interviewing the Complainant, interviewing the individual(s) identified as having violated the Act, interviewing any witnesses to the alleged violation as needed, and/or reviewing the allegedly objectionable materials at issue, if any.

The Principal or his/her designee shall thereafter meet with the Complainant within ten days of receiving the written complaint—unless another schedule is mutually agreed to by the Complainant and the Principal—and inform the Complainant whether a violation occurred, in whole or in part, and, if such a violation was found to have occurred, what remedial steps have been or will be taken; provided, however, that the confidentiality of student or personnel information shall not be violated.

If the Complainant so requests, the Principal or his/her designee shall within three days of the above referenced meeting, provide to the Complainant a written summary of findings of the investigation and a statement of remedial measures, if any; provided, however, that such written response shall not disclose any confidential student or personnel information.

#### **SECTION 6. Appeal of Principal's Decision**

If Complainant disagrees with the Principal's or his/her designee's determination, Complainant may, within 5 business days of receipt of the written findings, submit a request in writing to the Chair of the Board of Directors to review the Principal's or his/her designee's decision. The Board of Directors or its designee shall, within ten school days of receiving a written request, review the Principal's or his/her designee's determinations. Confidential student or personnel matters shall not be subject to review.

#### **SECTION 7. Appeal of Board of Directors' Decision**

If Complainant disagrees with the Board of Directors' decision, Complainant may submit a request in writing to the State Charter School Commission to review the Board of Directors' decision. The



State Charter School Commission shall take appropriate remedial measures. Confidential student or personnel matters shall not be subject to review.

## **PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS POLICY**

In accordance with the requirements found in Georgia House Bill 1178, The Anchor School maintains the following Parents' Bill of Rights Policy to promote and facilitate parental involvement in the School.

### **SECTION 1. Right to Access the Following Information**

Parents/guardians may request access to the following information under this Policy, by submitting a request in writing to the Principal.

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#### **A. Instructional Materials**

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Parents/guardians shall have the right to learn about their child's course of study, which includes the right to access instructional materials intended for use in their child's classroom. Such instructional materials shall be made available for review during the first two weeks of each grading period. Your child's teacher(s) will provide you information on where and how to access these materials.

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#### **B. Records Relating to Your Child**

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Parents/guardians shall have the right to review records relating to their child, including, but not limited to, current grade reports and attendance records. A request for this information should be made in writing and delivered to the Principal.

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#### **C. Promotion, Retention, and High School Graduation Policies and Requirements**

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Parents/guardians shall also have the right to access information relating to promotion and retention policies and high school graduation requirements.

Information requested under this policy shall be made available for inspection within a reasonable amount of time not to exceed three school days of receipt of a request. In those instances where some, but not all, of the information requested is available for inspection within three school days, the Principal shall make available within that time period such information as is available. In any instance where some or all of the information is unavailable within three school days of receipt of the request, and such information exists, the Principal shall, within such time period, provide the requester with a description of such information and a timeline for when the information will be available for inspection and shall provide the information or access thereto as soon as practicable but in no case later than 30 days of receipt of the request.

### **SECTION 2. Right to Object to Instructional Materials**

If a parent/guardian objects to any instructional materials intended for use in their child's classroom or recommended by their minor child's teacher, the parent/guardian shall first, as soon as possible after becoming aware of the objection, raise the objection with the child's teacher in which

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classroom the material is intended for use and/or who recommended the material. The teacher shall respond to the objection within five school days of its receipt, or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable.

If the parent/guardian is unsatisfied with the teacher's response, then within five school days of receiving the response, the parent/guardian shall submit a written objection to the Principal. Such objection should include a description of the allegedly objectionable material, the course in which the material is intended or recommended to be used, why the parent/guardian believes the material is objectionable, and, where possible, should attach a copy of the objectionable material.

The Principal will review the objection and within five school days of receiving the written objection, or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable, respond in writing to the parent/guardian to offer a resolution to the objection.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the Principal's proposed resolution, the parent/guardian may appeal to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors or its designee will review the matter at its next regularly scheduled meeting or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable, and notify the parent/guardian, relevant teacher, and Principal of its decision on the matter in writing.

### **SECTION 3. Right to Withdraw Child from Sex Education**

To the extent that any sex education is proposed as part of your child's course of study, you will be notified in advance by your child's teacher. Upon notification, you have the right to withdraw your child from the School's prescribed course of study in sex education by providing written objection to your child's teacher of your child's participation.

### **SECTION 4. Right to Opt-Out of Photographs, Videos, and Voice Recordings of Your Child**

Parents/guardians shall have the right to provide written notice that photographs, videos, or video recordings of their child(ren) are not permitted. This opt-out is subject to applicable public safety and security exceptions. For example, all students at the School will be subject to being recorded by the School's surveillance cameras.

### **SECTION 5. Review Procedures**

If the Principal denies a request for information or does not provide existing responsive information within 30 days, the parent/guardian may appeal such denial or failure to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors must place the appeal on the agenda for its next public meeting. If it is too late for such appeal to appear on the next meeting's agenda, the appeal must be included on the agenda for the subsequent meeting.

A parent aggrieved by the decision of the Board of Directors may appeal to the State Board of Education, as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1160(b).

**TECHNOLOGY/COMPUTER/INTERNET USE:** Computers are used to support learning and enhance instruction. Students will use computers frequently in their regular classrooms. However, all of these computer privileges depend on a student using the technology in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. A student may not:

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- Use the Internet for any illegal purpose;
- Use any social networking site;
- Use profane, obscene, impolite or abusive language;
- Change computer files that do not belong to the user;
- Violate someone else's privacy;
- Share his/her password with anyone except adults at the school.

A student will not be allowed to access the Internet or email until the student and a parent/guardian have signed a Technology Release agreement. Unacceptable use of the Internet will result in immediate revocation of access privileges.

ACCEPTABLE USE: Access to the Internet for TAS is provided for the sole purpose of academic achievement. The use of the Internet must be in support of education and consistent with the educational objectives of TAS. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state law or regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening, abusive, or obscene material, or material protected by trade secrets. Illegal activities and privacy and safety violations of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) are strictly prohibited.

### **Student or Family Grievance Procedure**

#### **Purpose**

This policy outlines how the Board of Directors will handle general grievances from The Anchor School stakeholders.

#### **Policy**

Any grievance at the school will fall into one of three primary categories:

1. Complaints about a student, the classroom experience, or a teacher.
2. Complaints or concerns about a school-wide policy or administration.
3. Complaints or concerns about a parent/guardian or community member involved with the school.

Where a grievance involves an issue arising in the classroom, parents/guardians should first seek to resolve the issue with the classroom teacher.

If resolution with the teacher is not feasible or the grievance involves a school-wide policy or another parent/guardian at the school, the parent/guardian pursuing the grievance should seek to resolve the issue with the Academy Director. The grievance should be acknowledged via written response within 10 business days, or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable.

If resolution with the Academy Director is not feasible or efforts to resolve the issue have been exhausted, then the parent/guardian should bring the grievance to the attention of the Head of School. The grievance should be acknowledged via written response within

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10 business days. For Category 1, the Head of School shall make the final determination.

For Categories 2 and 3 above, once all efforts to resolve a grievance have been exhausted with the school's staff and leadership, then a parent/guardian may bring a grievance to the attention of the Governing Board as follows:

Any grievances should be made in writing. This allows all parties involved to work from a consistent body of information.

Generally, the Board will not address a grievance that is made anonymously, based on hearsay, or made on behalf of another family.

Generally, the Board will not address a grievance where resolution has not been exhausted through the appropriate steps listed above.

The School may, at its discretion, notify individual school employees about grievances brought against them. Parents/guardians may, however, request that they not be personally identified as the party bringing the grievance.

For any grievance presented to the Board, a response via written letter will be sent within (30) thirty days of receipt of the grievance, or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable. The Board may delegate the review of a grievance to a member or members of the Board, legal counsel, or another designee at its discretion.

## **GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION**

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**CONTACT US:** The Anchor School is open for appointments from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on all school days provided in our school calendar.

**ADDRESS:** 2460 Wesley Chapel Road, UNIT 25A, Decatur, GA 30035

**ONLINE:** The Anchor School has an online presence through social media and our website.

[www.anchorschool.org](http://www.anchorschool.org)

On Instagram @anchorschoolatl.

On LinkedIn & Facebook – search “The Anchor School.”

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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The Anchor School is governed by a Board of Directors that brings community, educational, and professional experience and expertise to the school to ensure the success of the school and the realization of its mission. All board meetings are open to the public. Dates, times, and locations can be found on the website and will be posted at the school with advance notice. Please note that these dates are subject to change, so please check the website or with the office coordinator prior to attending.

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Members of the Board of Directors include:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Board Position</b>
Dr. Dawn Gregory	Board Chair
Jaamal Whittington	Board Treasurer
Jasmine Burton	General Board Member
Laura Stephens	General Board Member
Taylor Ramsey	General Board Member
Joseph Anfield-El	Vice Chair
Derrick Grisson	General Board Member
Emily Desprez Isbell	General Board Member
Vanecia Thompson	General Board Member
Nicole LeBlanc	Secretary

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## FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I can access the family handbook online or have received and reviewed a copy of The Anchor School's Family Handbook and understand and agree to the rules, regulations, and procedures laid out therein. I understand that the policies in this Handbook may change from time to time, at the school's sole discretion. I further understand that if I ever have any questions regarding school policies, I can always ask a member of the school community for further explanation.

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Student Name(s)

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Parent or Guardian Name

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Parent or Guardian Signature

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Date



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- <sup>i</sup> Hattie, J. (2017). Hattie's updated list of factors related to student achievement: 252 influences and effect sizes (Cohen's d). *Visible Learning*. 1. Retrieved from <https://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/>
- <sup>ii</sup> Davidson, J., & Dwyer, R. (2014). The role of professional learning in reducing isolation experienced by classroom music teachers. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, (1), 38-51.
- <sup>iii</sup> Vescio, V., Ross, D., & Adams, A. (2008). A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning. *Teaching and teacher education*, 24(1), 80-91.
- <sup>iv</sup> Edwards, S., & Edick Ph D, N. A. (2013). Culturally responsive teaching for significant relationships. *Journal of Praxis in Multicultural Education*, 7(1), 4.
- <sup>v</sup> Solber, S., Martin, J., Larson, M., Nichols, K., Booth, H. Lillis, J., & Costa, L. (2013). Promoting quality individualized learning plans throughout the lifespan: A revised and updated "ILP how to guide 2.0". *National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability: NCWD For Youth*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Promoting-Quality-ILPs-Throughout-the-Lifespan-WEB.pdf>
- <sup>vi</sup> Carrabba, C. & Farmer, A. (2018). The impact of project-based learning and direct instruction on the motivation and engagement of middle school students. *Language Teaching and Educational Research*, 1(2), 163-174. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/later/issue/41915/431930>
- <sup>vii</sup> Goodlad, K. & Leonard, A. (2018). Place-based learning across the disciplines: A living laboratory approach to pedagogy. *City University of New York (CUNY): CUNY Academic Works*. Retrieved from [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1325&context=ny\\_pubs](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1325&context=ny_pubs)
- <sup>viii</sup> Unknown Author. (2021). Eureka Math (2013-2014) Great Minds Series Overview. *EdReports*. Retrieved from <https://www.edreports.org/reports/overview/eureka-math-2013-2014>
- <sup>ix</sup> Unknown Author. (2021). EL Education Grades 6-8 Language Arts Curriculum (Second Edition) (2019). *EdReports*. Retrieved from <https://www.edreports.org/reports/overview/el-education-6-8-2019>.
- <sup>x</sup> Unknown Author. (2021). Amplify Science (2018) Amplify Series Overview. *EdReports*. Retrieved from <https://www.edreports.org/reports/overview/amplify-science-2018>.