

Local Boards of Education



Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority

**Revision
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Local Government
Records Commission
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Functional and Organizational Analysis of Local Boards of Education

Sources of Information

- Representatives of Local Boards of Education
- Representatives of the State Department of Education
- *Alabama Administrative Code*, Chapters 290-010-010 through 290-090-020
- Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-3-22 through 16-36-51
- Local Government Records Commission, *Local Boards of Education General Records Schedules* (1993)
- Martin, David, *Alabama's State and Local Governments* (1994)
- Owen, Thomas M. *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (1921)
- Rogers, William Warren, et al, *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State*
- Secretary of State's website
- Thomas, James D. and William H. Stewart, *Alabama Government and Politics* (1988)
- Weeks, Stephen B. *History of Public School Education in Alabama* (1915)

Historical Context

“The course of educational development in Alabama is from the local to the general, from the city to the State” (Weeks, p. 42). Mobile County created a board of school commissioners in 1826, thereby providing a model for the development of education in the state. This was the first official action in the state that moved education into the realm of public rather than private responsibility. The county also provided for educational funding through a combination of taxes and fees, including a 2% auction tax on the sale of real estate, slaves, and livestock. An 1836 act required that public schools be established throughout the county, not just in the city of Mobile.

In reality, however, the Mobile school commissioners were not a dynamic group. Instead of organizing and opening new schools, they divided public money equally among parochial schools, leaving the school commissioners with little control over the quality of education provided. The commissioners acted only as agents for the collection of public money and its distribution to private schools. In 1852, a newly-elected board of commissioners opened the first truly public school in Mobile County, utilizing the building formerly occupied by the Barton Academy. Although public funding continued, tuition was still collected from all students, and in 1853 it provided more than 1/3 of total funding for schools. Tuition rates were still lower than for private schools, and indigent students were permitted to attend without paying tuition. In 1854, a city superintendent was appointed for Mobile, and school districts were created for both the city and the county. Mobile's system continued its progress – with more public funding, lower tuition charges, and an extension of free education to an increasing number of students – until it was disrupted and impoverished by the Civil War and Reconstruction.

On the state level, in the early years there was “little besides a few legal provisions that probably never lived beyond the state books; and the few efforts made for schools were mainly tentative” (Weeks, p. 48). One of the provisions of the Act of Congress approved March 2, 1819,

authorizing the inhabitants of the Territory of Alabama to proceed toward statehood, had granted the sixteenth section of land in every township to the inhabitants of the township for the use of schools. The earliest state law, creating school trustees, came in the same year as statehood. In 1823, a more comprehensive act confirmed some basics of Alabama school policy: sale or lease of school lands, schools that were open to all, and tuition charged to all who could afford to pay. State funding was not addressed by the legislature until 1839. Its relative generosity was compromised in the early 1840s, however, by the failure of the state bank. As was the case in Mobile, available state funds were mainly distributed to private schools in the 1840s, and the state provided little supervision beyond requiring financial accounting. This can be seen as a learning period for state and local officials new to the administration of an educational system, but “even then the spirit of education was moving on the face of the waters of ignorance. Public leaders, vaguely conscious of their needs, were groping, blindly, it may be, but nevertheless with hope for better things” (Weeks, 51).

In the early 1850s, a sense of energy, change, and organization began to infiltrate the nascent public education system. Alabama’s first state superintendent, Gen. William F. Perry, was appointed in 1854. He later reminisced about the state’s schools as he first saw them: “Many . . . beggared description. But for the rude benches visible through the cracks, and the broken slates and tattered spelling books scattered around them, any one would have been at a loss to determine for what purpose connected with civilized life they were designed...A majority [of teachers] were men, and in most cases, men who had resorted to teaching because they had proved unfit for anything else” (quoted in Weeks, 56). The Alabama Education Law of 1854 called for the election of three school commissioners from each county, including the probate judge, and three elected trustees for each township. The commission was to supervise county schools and control their finances. Other provisions of the law required the grading of classes and at least a minimal examination into teacher qualifications.

The greatest weaknesses in the new law came in the area of local administration and lack of supervision. Probate judges were required to assume new duties without additional compensation. Few responded to the state superintendent’s requests for reports and statistics. The town trustees were generally uneducated themselves and often quarreled over where to locate the schools. Salaries were slow to be paid. In response to criticisms of the 1854 law, the position of county superintendent of education was created by the state legislature in 1856. Among his other duties, the county superintendent was mandated to make a variety of reports to the state superintendent, to examine teachers, to visit all schools in the county at least once a year, and to organize meetings of teachers to provide continuing education for them. Also under this law, the length of the school year was set at six months, although Mobile County already maintained a nine-month year. One result of this flurry of legislative activity was that school enrollment almost doubled in the first six years of the decade.

Little progress was made in public education during the remainder of the nineteenth century. Widespread disorganization in the local school systems resulted from the societal changes brought about by the Civil War and the Reconstruction period. New state laws were not uniformly implemented in the impoverished localities. For a brief period between 1868 and 1870, public education was nominally free in Alabama, despite the fact that state funds were not available to pay for it. The late 19th century was characterized by rapid turnover in state

superintendents, only one serving longer than four years. One of the few bright spots was the increasing professionalization of teachers, as indicated by the formation of teachers' associations, institutes, and reading circles, and the establishment of additional normal schools.

County boards of education were created in 1901. In 1915 – a banner year for public education – the state legislature passed a compulsory school attendance law. Public funding of education had increased over the years; but it was not until 1915 that the legislature proposed an amendment to the state constitution, later ratified, that authorized counties and school districts to levy for the first time a tax for school purposes. The legislature also provided for the administration of the schools in a county as a unit. The latter legislation led to the decline of the old-style, politically connected school superintendent and promoted increased qualifications, expertise, and professionalism. Advances in education laws and administration during this decade (1910-1919) “rounded out the hitherto incoherent school system” (Owen, p. 522) and gave it essentially the same structure it maintains today.

In spite of this legislative progress, a 1918 study by the Russell Sage Foundation reported “a grim landscape of neglect and inequity” (Rogers, et al, p. 413). Alabama’s education spending was barely half of the national average. Education for black children served only half the elementary-age population, with a school term that averaged less than five months per year. By 1927, Alabama still ranked only 45th among the 48 states in adult literacy. The Sage Foundation report blamed Alabama’s inadequate and inequitable system of taxation, specifically its low property tax assessments. The Kilby and Graves administrations made significant strides toward fighting illiteracy during the good economic years of the 1920s, with local Opportunity Schools for adults, increased funding for teacher salaries, and a program of school construction and consolidation of rural schools. Unfortunately, the financial hardships of the Depression seriously undermined the progress that had been made.

Over time, there has been an increasing centralization of educational policy-making at the state level. An important reason for this is that in Alabama, in contrast to many states, localities contribute a much smaller percentage of funding to their schools than comes from the state, although there have been some communities with a strong economic base that have been willing to impose healthy taxes on their residents for education. Lack of local support for schools goes back to the early days of public education in Alabama and was entrenched by the 1870s, with the possible exception of Mobile County, which continued to operate semi-independently of state control. Historically this situation has resulted in striking disparities in the quality of education between wealthy and poor school districts. State policies have attempted to equalize educational opportunities for all students through such programs as the Foundation Program, but differences in local funding of schools have perpetuated disparities. Recent legislative acts have taken the approach of requiring a level of accountability from all school systems, with the threat of state supervision and ultimate takeover if certain standards of financial stability, academic achievement, and school safety and discipline are not met (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-6B-1 through 16-6B-11).

Agency Organization

Local Boards of Education. There are 67 county boards of education. In general, five county

board members are elected to six-year, staggered terms from designated districts. Such districts are established by the county board according to the last federal census, “utilizing the principle of equal representation.” They must be re-apportioned after each subsequent decennial census (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-8-1). County boards are required to meet at least six times a year.

There are currently 65 municipal boards of education. Only municipalities with populations of more than 5,000 are permitted to establish their own school systems, although they are not required to create them. A few municipal boards of education are elected, but more commonly the city council appoints board members. Alabama Act 99-408 called for an amendment to the Constitution of 1901 to give the legislature the power to provide by local law for an elected city board of education, in any municipality that had a city board of education, by means of a public referendum. Alabama voters approved this amendment in October 1999. Usually, municipal boards consist of five members who serve five-year, staggered terms.

In addition to the county and municipal boards, there is a separate school system for the three campuses of the Alabama Department of Youth Services. In this case, the board is composed of representatives of state agencies and legislators. (Refer to the RDA for the Department of Youth Services for the disposition of records in this school system.)

In procedures similar to those of the State Board of Education, local boards of education set local educational policy within the framework of state and federal regulations and guidelines, of which there are a considerable number. Both the state legislature and the state Board of Education contribute to policies that must be implemented by the local boards of education. The state Superintendent of Education has authority to review the actions of the local boards (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-4-8) and since 1995 has acquired additional power to intervene in quite decisively or even take over the affairs of a local system. To ensure local accountability, state law requires each county or city board of education to create an annual report/financial statement (which must be available for public inspection in the board office, in every high school, and the local public library) and to publicize its availability within the community. In addition, each local board must furnish information to the state Department of Education required for the department’s *Annual Status Reports on the Condition of Education in Each County and in Each City Board of Education* (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-8-37 and 16-11-24).

Local Superintendents of Education. The local superintendent serves as the chief executive officer of the board and as its secretary. Most county superintendents are elected and serve four-year terms. Some county superintendents, and all city superintendents, are appointed by the local board and serve under contract. They must meet certain qualifications, including an Alabama certificate in administration and supervision; a degree from a recognized four-year college or university; and experience as a public school teacher, principal, or supervisor (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-9-2). Local superintendents are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the schools. They recommend for the board’s approval candidates for administrative, teaching, and support positions in the local system. Although the local board is designated as the policy-making body, in practice the superintendent most often initiates policy and presents it to the board for approval.

Agency Function and Subfunctions

The mandated function of the local boards of education in Alabama is to provide a free public education to every Alabama child in grades kindergarten through 12. The local boards function as the mechanism in Alabama's public education system that makes possible the actual delivery of services to the child through elementary, middle, junior high, and senior high schools. The local boards primarily carry out the Public Services function of local government in Alabama.

In the performance of its mandated function, a local board of education may engage in the following subfunctions, either directly or through the agency of the local superintendent or the local schools:

- **Making and Implementing Policy.** Local boards of education make policy for their schools through decisions promulgated during their regular meetings. The public may attend these meetings and contribute ideas and opinions that may influence a board's decision. When an issue of particular interest arises, boards may call special meetings or public hearings to solicit public opinion, and such opinion may carry significant weight in a board's ultimate decision, particularly if board members are elected. Boards create policy within the framework of state and federal regulations. They are limited in their power to create policy by the higher policy initiatives of the state Department of Education and, to a lesser extent, by the U.S. Department of Education. Significant policy made by local boards includes decisions concerning construction of new facilities, use of current facilities, selection of a superintendent in local systems where the superintendent is not elected, designation of magnet and vocational schools, curriculum offerings beyond the basic course of study required by state law, consolidation of schools, and school zoning. In addition to making policy, local boards have the responsibility of implementing policy created on the state and federal level and adapting it to local situations.
- **Promoting Child Nutrition.** The largest federal program administered on the local level is the Child Nutrition Program, created as a result of the National School Lunch Act, the Child Nutrition Act, and the Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-13-11, *et seq.* The program's responsibilities include meeting the nutritional needs of the students; administering, supervising, and operating the program under contract with the State Department of Education; approving expenditures from program income for salaries, operating expenses, and equipment as authorized by the state Department of Education; providing free and reduced-price meals to eligible students, as prescribed by federal regulations; and establishing procedures to comply with the Alabama Bid Law and Federal Procurement Standards. School systems participate in numerous other state and federal grant programs to provide for specific needs within the system. These are discussed under the appropriate subfunction.
- **Providing Student Transportation.** A public school system may offer transportation to and from school to all students residing within its jurisdiction. (There is no requirement under state law to do so, except for children having special needs.) Although school buses have traditionally been a means of making education universally

available, school systems, either voluntarily or under court order, have also used busing in an effort to achieve racial balance in their public schools. The Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-27-1, requires all local boards of education that provide transportation services to employ a “competent supervisor or manager” of transportation services and further mandates periodic safety inspection of all vehicles used to transport students and special training and licensing of their drivers. Vehicle safety inspections must be carried out monthly by qualified mechanics. Additional licensing requirements for drivers include a 12-hour course of instruction in bus driving and the passing of both a written examination and a driving performance test (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-27-4). Although drivers of school buses must wear a seat belt, this requirement is not extended to the passengers (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-27-6).

- **Documenting Student Attendance.** The Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-28-3 requires every child in the state of Alabama between the ages of 7 and 16 years to attend school, public or private (Alabama Act 2012-295 changed the ages to 6 and 17), or to receive instruction by a competent private tutor for the entire length of the school term. Documenting attendance has been important to the public education system since its beginning. State law has required local school systems to conduct quadrennial and decennial school censuses since the early years of public education (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-9-29). Today, keeping accurate attendance statistics is vital to the process of obtaining state and federal funding for local schools. This subfunction is therefore highly regulated by the state Department of Education and tied to its record-keeping requirements.

The state of Alabama demonstrates its commitment to compulsory school attendance by requiring that in order to obtain a learner’s permit or driver’s license, an applicant under age 19 must show proof of school enrollment or evidence of graduation from high school (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-28-40). Parents or legal guardians are held accountable for a student’s nonattendance and may be subject to criminal sanctions. They are required to furnish an excuse or some explanation of the cause of any absence of any student for whom they are responsible. School systems must also establish programs to inform parents and guardians of their education-related responsibilities. Each local board must appoint a school attendance officer for every school district in the system. This individual is responsible for enforcing attendance laws, working with parents and guardians, keeping accurate records, and making an annual report to the local board (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-28-18).

- **Promoting School/Student Discipline, Safety, and Health.** Public school systems have the dual responsibility of ensuring that students in their districts are attending school, as required by law, and of maintaining a disciplined school environment that is conducive to learning. Attendance officers are increasingly involved in carrying out school disciplinary procedures because poor attendance and other undesirable conduct are quite often closely linked. Disciplinary problems may also lead to enforced absence from school through suspension or expulsion. Each local board of education must adopt a written policy for its standards on school behavior. At the beginning of each academic year, a copy of the policy is provided to every child’s parent or guardian.

Parents and guardians are held legally accountable for their children's behavior, as well as for their attendance, and may be subject to criminal penalties if a child's behavior results in suspension from school (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-28-12). School principals and local boards have a degree of latitude in dealing with disciplinary problems within their systems. Some have developed alternative schools so that students who have been suspended or are chronic disciplinary problems may continue to attend school.

Schools must also be concerned with providing a safe and healthy environment for their students. A federally-funded program, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, promotes school activities throughout the year to raise student awareness about the dangers of violence and drugs. School counselors are available in many public schools to assist students with behavioral, emotional, or academic problems. Local boards employ school nurses to provide routine health screening and disease prevention.

- **Conveying Knowledge.** Teaching is the primary activity of this subfunction, which is the direct link between the state Department of Education, local school systems, and the individual student. It is the process that all other education activities support. However, teachers do not operate independently; they must follow courses of study approved by state and local boards and use textbooks selected by a state committee and then a local committee. Local boards may also design special programs in magnet schools and prescribe teaching methods, class size, and specific classroom equipment and learning aids to assist teachers in performing their duties. Other areas in this subfunction include those that support the learning process, e.g., course scheduling activities and the school library.
- **Evaluating Students and Conferring Credentials.** This subfunction includes activities that measure a student's academic achievements, school performance, and standing as compared to a state or national average. Evaluation is carried out at the local school level, but it consists both of measuring knowledge and skills acquired in an individual classroom and of state-mandated assessment of achievement, as approved by the State Board of Education. As a student's school career progresses, s/he completes the tasks and learns the skills necessary to progress to the next level (i.e., from kindergarten to first grade, elementary to middle school, etc.). If this process is successfully completed, the school system awards the student a high-school diploma, which in turn permits the graduate to enter into certain job categories or higher education and training. Some Alabama students do not follow this path; they may exit with an Alabama Occupational Diploma, a certificate, or no document at all.
- **Sponsoring Student Activities.** Public schools provide much more than formal education for their students. They function as the center of social life for many young people, providing them with opportunities to participate in sports, to explore personal interests and possible future professions through clubs and organizations, and to experience the democratic process through school elections. Some schools organize community service programs to give students volunteer experience in working with members of the local community. Local boards of education consider such activities important in developing a well-rounded student, and students' accomplishments outside

the classroom may play a vital role in their eventual admission to a college or university. In addition to their role in conveying knowledge, teachers act as sponsors, advisors, and mentors for various school groups.

- **Administering Internal Operations.** Each local board of education acts as the administrative center for all the schools in a local school system. It is responsible for meeting the administrative requirements set by the state Department of Education in the areas of finance, personnel administration, record keeping, and property management. It collects and submits to the state department all information and reports required by state law and administrative regulations. Individual schools do, of course, perform administrative functions and maintain administrative records; but the majority of these records provide data that is eventually combined into system-wide reports. Administering Internal Operations includes the following groups of activities:

Managing the agency: Activities include internal office management activities common to most government agencies, such as corresponding and communicating; scheduling; meeting; documenting policy and procedures; reporting; litigating; drafting, promoting or tracking legislation; publicizing and providing information; managing records; and managing information systems technology.

Managing finances: Activities include budgeting (preparing and reviewing a budget package, submitting the budget package to the state or local department of finance, documenting amendments and performance of the budget, and reporting on established budget categories); purchasing (requisitioning and purchasing supplies and equipment, accounting for expenditures, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products received); accounting for the expenditure, encumbrance, disbursement, and reconciliation of funds within the agency's budget through a uniform system of accounting and reporting); authorizing travel; contracting with companies or individuals; bidding for products and services; assisting in the audit process; investing; and issuing bonds.

Managing human resources: Activities include recruiting and hiring eligible individuals to fill vacant positions within the agency; providing compensation to employees; providing benefits such as leave, health insurance, unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, injury compensation, retirement and death benefits; supervising employees by evaluating performance, promoting, granting leave, and monitoring the accumulation of leave; training and providing continuing education for employees; and disciplining.

Managing properties, facilities, and resources: Activities include inventorying and accounting for non-consumable property and reporting property information to the appropriate authority; constructing buildings and facilities; leasing and/or renting offices or facilities; providing security for property owned by the agency; and assigning, inspecting and maintaining agency property, including vehicles. The State Superintendent of Education must approve all new construction of school facilities, and renovations of and additions to existing facilities funded from local, state, or

federal sources (AAC, 290-020-020-.01).

Records Appraisal of Local Boards of Education

The following is a discussion of the three major categories of records created and/or maintained by Boards of Education: Temporary Records, Permanent Records, and Records No Longer Created.

Temporary Records

Temporary records should be held for what is considered their active life and be disposed of once all fiscal, legal, and administrative requirements have been met. Some of the temporary records created by the board are discussed below:

- **Records documenting the “Providing Student Transportation” Subfunction.** Records in this section are partly governed by federal Guideline No. 17, a directive from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. In this edition of the RDA, the records have been rearranged and reappraised with help from the Department of Education’s Pupil Transportation staff. Local school systems report information on school bus routes and periodic safety inspections of school buses to Pupil Transportation, using two series of forms (TR forms for “regular” school buses, and SN forms for special needs student buses). Pupil Transportation maintains information compiled from some reports in databases for as long as 10 years.
- **Student Schedule Cards.** These records list each student’s class schedule and may contain other information, such as the student’s locker combination (also recorded in Student Locker Information below) and Social Security number. They are not the official documentation of student scheduling requests or changes (see Guidance Counselor/Advisor Files below) and serve only to assist the student in navigating through the day. Therefore, they are not monitored by the Department of Education or needed by the student or the local school beyond the end of the school year.
- **Special Education Student Records/Gifted and Talented Student Records (GEP Folders).** Records for each student enrolled in a special education program include identifying information, parental consent forms, and most current eligibility documentation. Disposition in this edition of the RDA, “Retain 5 years after the termination of the special education program in which they were used” adheres exactly to the wording of Chapter 290-8-9.08(2)(h)1-3 of the Alabama Administrative Code, which provides rules for the retention of special education student records. Under the revised disposition, the state Department of Education has directed that on January 1, 2014, all records from January 1, 2009 and back may be destroyed, regardless of whether the student is active or inactive in the school system. The special education program referred to is the program created for an individual student, not the local school or school system’s overall special education program. The state department has also requested a minor change in disposition for records of gifted and talented students, with the phrase “reaches age 18” replacing “exits school.”
- **Guidance Counselor/Advisor Files: Student course and schedule requests, course**

and schedule changes, and elective sheets. These records include course requests and elective sheets submitted by students, as well as course and schedule changes made by local school officials in setting student schedules. Such “in-house” changes are not monitored by the state Department of Education, and courses actually taken are reflected in students’ permanent files. These records therefore have limited importance, although some (for instance, freshman course requests completed by 8th-graders) may be needed beyond the end of a school year. ALSDE’s Prevention and Support Services division has recommended retaining these records for one year after the student’s graduation.

- **Certification Records: Expired certificates.** These records include expired certificates for teachers and other professional employees of the school system. Under the provisions of the Alabama Administrative Code, Chapters 290-3-2-.33(1) through (10), teaching certificates, and those of other professional educators, are valid for five years. They may be updated and continued before June 30 of the year that they expire. An expired certificate may be reinstated by meeting all current requirements for certification within 5 years (60 months) of its expiration. The Department of Education’s teacher certification staff has recommended a retention period of six years for these records, which would cover the period allowed for reinstatement and allow disposal of certificates maintained in outdated Employee Personnel Files.

Permanent Records

The Archives Division recommends the following records as permanent:

Making and Implementing Policy

- **Local Board of Education Policies and Procedures.** These records include policies established by the local board on a wide range of issues. The creation of many of these policies is mandated by state Department of Education. They are primary evidence of the board’s philosophy and its execution of its mandate to provide education to all the children in a locality, taking into account their particular needs. Many of the policies are available to the public in printed form.
- **Improvement Plans.** Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-6B-1 through -12 allows the state Department of Education to intervene if a local system or school is not meeting certain standards of financial management, academic achievement, or safety and discipline. In the first phase of intervention (Alert 1), a school system or individual school must provide a self-study and improvement plan to demonstrate how it will meet required standards and return to autonomous operation. This plan informs the public of the existing problems and proposed solutions.
- **Board Meeting Minutes/Meeting Packet.** Meeting minutes are the primary documentation of the making of policy for the local school system and of local system implementation of federal and state educational policy. The meeting packet includes all reports and attachments provided at a meeting of the board of education.

- **Administrative Correspondence.** This correspondence is at the executive or policy-making level only and would normally include communications between the state superintendent of education and the local superintendent, the local superintendent and the board, and the local superintendent and local school principals.

Promoting Child Nutrition

Permanent documentation of the Child Nutrition Program can be found in the school system's annual and accountability reports, minutes of the local board of education, policies and procedures manuals, and administrative correspondence, as well as in documentation at the state Department of Education.

Providing Transportation

Permanent documentation of student transportation programs can be found in the school system's annual and accountability records, minutes of the local board of education, policies and procedures manuals, and administrative correspondence, as well as in documentation at the state Department of Education.

Documenting Student Attendance

- **School Censuses.** The quadrennial and decennial censuses of all children in a county or municipality are mandated by Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-8-31 and 16-11-10, but many school systems no longer create them. The censuses indicate the name, age, grade level, gender, and race of each pupil and provide demographic data for the area served by the school system in much the same way that the U.S. decennial census does.

Promoting School/Student Safety, Health, and Discipline

- **Attendance Officer Annual Reports.** These reports are mandated by Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-28-18. They document the evolution of the school attendance officer from the "truant officer" concerned chiefly with school absenteeism to the school system's primary disciplinary and intervention officer. In addition to the required report of "all notices served, all cases prosecuted and all other services performed" required by the Code, these reports contain information on dropout rates, suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary matters.
- **Student Drug-Testing and Drug-Free Education Records: Records documenting school/board of education policy on student drug testing and education.** These records document the board of education's efforts to reduce student drug and alcohol abuse through a system of drug testing and anti-drug use education. Overall retention requirements are adapted from federal requirements for employee drug-testing programs. The series listed here is appraised as permanent on the same basis as other records that establish board of education policies and procedures.

Conveying Knowledge

- **Student Handbooks.** At the beginning of the school year, public schools often supply handbooks to their students that contain school regulations and procedures, course offerings, graduation requirements, and sometimes information about student activities. They are an excellent concise summary of the curricula an individual school offers its students and what it expects of them.
- **Special Education Programs: Selection and Placement Requirements.** These records represent the core documentation of the special education programs that a school system offers. They provide student admission requirements and selection criteria, as well as the key program elements.
- **Gifted and Talented Programs: Selection and Placement Requirements.** These records represent the core documentation of the gifted and talented programs that a school system offers. They provide student admission requirements and selection criteria, as well as the key program elements.
- **Magnet Schools: Selection and Placement Requirements.** These records represent the core documentation of the magnet school programs that a school system offers. They provide student admission requirements and selection criteria, as well as the overall theme of the school, since school systems may designate magnet schools for various elements of the school population (i.e., magnets for the arts, for the academically talented, for the sciences, for technology, etc.).
- **Vocational Education: Selection and Placement Requirements.** These records represent the core documentation of the vocational education programs that a school system offers. They provide student admission requirements and selection criteria, as well as the key program elements.
- **Adult and Community Education: Selection and Placement Requirements.** These records represent the core documentation of the adult and community education programs that a school system offers. They provide student admission requirements and selection criteria, as well as the key program elements.
- **Community Education: Course Offerings.** Course offerings of community education programs are often published as brochures or in the newspapers. They document not only the curriculum of these programs but community interests as well, since courses are often offered in response to local interest or demand.
- **Service Plans.** The state Department of Education requires that local school systems formulate plans describing how educational services will be provided for various groups of students, including students with disabilities, gifted students, vocational education students, and at-risk students. Together with the selection and placement requirements, these plans document school system efforts to provide an education to a diverse

population of students with a variety of needs.

Evaluating Students and Conferring Credentials

- **Student Records.** These are the official student records of an individual student during his/her period of enrollment in the school. They have continuing legal and administrative value to the school and local board of education, as well as to the student, gathering in one file all important and relevant information pertaining to the student. These remain in a school or another location designated by the superintendent for all students who have attended the school. A duplicate copy is filed in the local superintendent's office or some storage place other than the school (AAC, 290-3-1). The records are subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (34 CFR, 99.3).
- **Guidance Counselor/Advisor Files: policy statements on guidance counseling/ advising students.** These records document efforts by local school teachers and/or guidance counselors to advise students on academic progress, career plans, social problems, or other concerns. They may include policy statements, which (like all policy-related records) are appraised as permanent. Files on individual students, and related correspondence, are appraised as: "Retain until student reaches age 21." While they retain value until the student leaves the system, from a legal standpoint they are "juvenile files" on the same basis as Student Discipline Files.

Sponsoring Student Activities

- **Student Activities History Files.** These records document the non-academic elements of student life in the public schools, including sporting events, clubs and organizations, contests and competitions, performances, cultural activities, and other events. They exist in a variety of formats, including newspaper clippings, student newspapers, yearbooks, photographs, videotapes and audiotapes, meeting minutes, election records, programs, and publicity materials. While students' individual accomplishments are documented in their permanent student records, the records created as a result of school activities may provide the most complete picture available of public school life. Since they are created by a number of different individuals, classes, clubs, and organizations in a school, we are recommending that they be collected and maintained by the school librarian or in cooperation with a local library, archives, or historical society.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing the Agency

- **Local Board of Education Internal Policies and Procedures.** These records document how the local school system is managed and how state policies regarding internal office administration are carried out. They address issues such as hiring of teachers and other personnel, standardizing and grading of public schools, and managing finances.
- **Local School System Historical Files.** With the addition of a new record series, this schedule (formerly Local Board of Education Historical Files) has been retitled. The latter records are still included as "Board of Education historical files." Such files are

maintained by the central office to document the history of the local board of education and its schools. They may contain scrapbooks, ledgers or volumes, superintendent's speeches, or newspaper clipping files pertaining to important events or issues in the history of the school system. The second series, Local School News Bulletins/Announcements, comprises daily news bulletins or "morning announcements" routinely read over the intercom at local schools. While most matters covered are of ephemeral importance, collectively the records provide a day-to-day history of school events. Both record series are appraised as permanent. For the second one, however, the disposition requirement applies to one file copy; other copies may be destroyed without notice.

- **Publicity and Informational Materials.** These are printed materials intended to publicize school system events, deadlines, course offerings, and special programs. They document the school system's efforts to communicate to the public about its programs and procedures.
- **Accreditation Reports.** These records document, for each school in a school system, the accreditation process carried out by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SACS). They consist of the self-study report, prepared by the school, and the school review team report prepared by SACS. They provide evidence of the school's goals and its efforts to meet them and indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the school over time.
- **Annual Reports.** The local boards of education create many annual reports for the state Department of Education. The most important of these, the ones designated as permanent records, provide accountability to the public as well. These include the accountability reports required by Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-6B-7 on such subjects as funding and expenditure, student achievement, and school safety and discipline, and the State Superintendent's Annual Report Card for the school system (which is now online).
- **Websites and Social Media.** Many local boards of education are developing web and social media sites to respond to public inquiries and provide information on school requirements, activities, and schedules. In order to document these records over time, the proposed disposition calls for a "snapshot" of the sites to be retained annually or as often as significant changes are made to it.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Finances

- **Approved Annual Budgets.** Budgeting records document preparing an agency budget request package and reporting the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance. The final annual budget approved by the school board provides permanent documentation of a local school system's program priorities, financial planning, and compliance with state and federal mandates.
- **Audit Reports.** School system audits are most often performed by the Examiners of Public Accounts; individual schools are generally audited by independent auditors. It is important that these audits be maintained permanently at the local level to provide financial accountability to the public that the school system serves.

- **General Ledgers: General ledgers and detailed year-end trial balances created prior to 1975.** The general ledger is the record of final entry for all financial transactions: collecting fees and other revenue, purchasing, investing, administering state and federal funds, and general accounting. Originally, general ledgers were generated manually; now, these records and another financial summary, the detailed year-end trial balance, are often electronically created. This revision of the RDA limits permanent retention to general ledgers and trial balances created before 1975. Later records retain the 10-year period previously approved for those in electronic format. Annual Financial reports and Audit Reports provide permanent documentation of school boards' financial practices.
- **Grant Project Files: Final narrative reports.** Local school systems and individual schools are recipients of both state and federal grants and would function much less effectively without this assistance. Most documentation associated with these grants is short-term accounting material. The final narrative report, however, summarizes the goals of the grant, how the money was used, and what was accomplished. The grant reports designated here are only the ones associated with grants awarded directly to the local school system or school, not grants that are administered through programs at the State Department of Education.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Human Resources

- **Employee Handbooks.** Employee handbooks provide guidance to new employees about personnel rules and other school board policies and procedures. They may serve as evidence of compliance with state and federal hiring practices and may be used in personnel-related litigations.
- **Employee Newsletters.** Employee newsletters offer a narrative of local board of education employment policies, employee programs and benefits, and information on individual employees. Along with the employee handbook, they are the primary documentation of human resources management.
- **Training Records: Training standards, policies, procedures, and publications.** These records document the school board's overall standards, policies, and procedures in providing specialized training to its employees. They may include general policy statements or guidelines, training manuals, or other publications. Like other administrative policies and procedures, they are appraised as permanent. Documentation of training standards may also be needed to demonstrate that employees received adequate training in the performance of their job responsibilities.
- **"Drug Free Workplace" Records.** These records document the school system's substance abuse policies and training, as well as drug and alcohol testing of employees. Under the federal Americans With Disabilities Act, such medical-related records may not be included in employee personnel files. The proposed disposition is generally based on 49 CFR Ch. VI 655.71 (10-1-05 edition). Under federal requirements, training records,

testing records, and medical information (drug treatment referrals) are all short-term. However, policies and procedures on drug and alcohol abuse are scheduled here as permanent, like other policy-related records.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources

- **School Construction Project Files: As-built plans, specifications, and blueprints of buildings of significant historical interest.** These records document all activities pertaining to the planning and construction of educational facilities. In conformity with other RDAs, this schedule has been revised to stipulate permanent retention of plans, specifications, and blueprints of buildings of significant historical interest. It also provides more detailed disposition instructions for subsidiary construction project records, such as preliminary specifications, plans, and blueprints; financial records, and inspection reports.

Records No Longer Created

- **School Registers/Teachers' Registers/Promotion Registers.** These registers, usually in bound ledger form, may go back to the nineteenth century. They were commonly created by teachers and document all the students in each class for each year. In addition to identifying information, some of them contain recommendations for promotion and additional comments on the habits and ability of the student.
- **Court-Ordered Busing Plans and Maps.** These plans and maps indicated what neighborhoods or areas in a school system were served by each school. They were created (primarily during the 1970s->80s) in response to court orders mandating that Alabama's school systems utilize busing of students to achieve racial balance in the schools. These records document the systems' response to and implementation of court orders.

Permanent Records List Boards of Education

Making and Implementing Policy

1. Local Board Policies and Procedures
2. Improvement Plans
3. Board Meeting Minutes/Meeting Packet
4. Administrative Correspondence

Documenting Student Attendance

1. School Censuses

Promoting School/Student Safety, Health, and Discipline

1. Attendance Officer Annual Reports
2. Student Drug-Testing and Drug-Free Education Records: Records documenting school/board of education policy on student drug testing and education

Conveying Knowledge

1. Student Handbooks
2. Special Education Programs: Selection and Placement Requirements
3. Gifted and Talented Programs: Selection and Placement Requirements
4. Magnet Schools – Selection and Placement Requirements
5. Vocational Education – Selection and Placement Requirements
6. Adult and Community Education: Selection and Placement Requirements
7. Community Education: Course Offerings
8. Service Plans

Evaluating Performance and Conferring Credentials

1. Student Records
2. Guidance Counselor/Advisor Files: policy statements on guidance counseling/ advising students

Sponsoring Student Activities

1. Student Activities History Files

Administering Internal Operations: Managing the Agency

1. Local Board of Education Internal Policies and Procedures
2. Local School System Historical Files
3. Publicity and Informational Materials

4. Accreditation Records
5. Annual Reports
6. Websites and Social Media

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Finances

1. Approved Annual Budgets
2. Audit Reports
3. General Ledgers and Detailed Year-end Trial Balances: Records created since 1975
4. Grant Project Files – Final narrative reports

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Human Resources

1. Employee Handbooks
2. Employee Newsletters
3. Training Records: Training standards, policies, procedures, and publications
4. “Drug-Free Workplace” Records: Drug/alcohol abuse policy and procedures documentation

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources

1. School Construction Project Files: As-built plans, specifications, and blueprints of buildings of significant historical interest

Records No Longer Created

1. School Registers/Teachers’ Registers/Promotion Registers
2. Court-Ordered Busing Plans and Maps

Local Boards of Education Records Disposition Authority

This Records Disposition Authority (RDA) is issued by the Local Government Records Commission under the authority granted by the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-13-5 and 41-13-22 through 24. It was compiled by the Archives Division, Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), which serves as the Commission's staff, in cooperation with representatives of the Local Boards of Education. The RDA lists records created and maintained by the Agency in carrying out their mandated functions and activities. It establishes minimum retention periods and disposition instructions for those records and provides the legal authority for the Agency to implement records destruction.

Alabama law requires public officials to create and maintain records that document the business of their offices. These records must be protected from "mutilation, loss, or destruction," so that they may be transferred to an official's successor in office and may be made available to members of the public. Records also must be kept in accordance with auditing standards approved by the Examiners of Public Accounts (Code of Alabama 1975 § 36-12-2, 36-12-4, and 41-5-23). For assistance in implementing this RDA, or for advice on records disposition or other records management concerns, contact the agency records manager or ADAH Archives Division at (334) 242-4452.

Explanation of Records Requirements

The RDA shall govern the disposition of all records, regardless of format, created by the agency from creation to dissolution. Please contact the staff of the Department of Archives and History before destroying any records created prior to 1940.

This RDA supersedes any previous records disposition schedules or RDAs governing the retention of the records created by the Agency. Copies of superseded schedules are no longer valid and may not be used for records disposition.

The RDA establishes retention and disposition instructions for records listed below, regardless of the medium on which those records may be kept. Electronic mail, for example, is a communications tool that may record permanent or temporary information. As for records in any other format, the retention periods for e-mail records are governed by the requirements of the subfunctions to which the records belong.

Certain other record-like materials are not actually regarded as official records and may be disposed of under this RDA. Such materials include (1) duplicate record copies that do not require official action, so long as the creating office maintains the original record for the period required; (2) catalogs, trade journals, and other publications received that require no action and do not document agency activities; (3) stocks of blank stationery, blank forms, or other surplus materials that are not subject to audit and have become obsolete; (4) transitory records, which are temporary records created for short-term, internal purposes, may include, but are not limited to, telephone call-back messages, drafts of ordinary documents not needed for their evidential value, copies of material sent for information purposes but not needed by the receiving office for future

business, and internal communications about social activities; (5) honorary materials, plaques, awards, presentations, certificates, and gifts received or maintained by the agency staff. They may be disposed of without documentation of destruction.

Any record created by a local school or board of education prior to 1900 shall be regarded as permanent.

Records Disposition Requirements

This section of the RDA is arranged by subfunctions and lists records created and/or maintained in carrying out those subfunctions. A local board of education may submit requests to revise specific records disposition requirements, or to create requirements for additional records, to the Local Government Records Commission for consideration at its regular quarterly meetings.

At the end of this section is a list of **Records No Longer Created** by local boards of education that may still be maintained in local schools or administrative offices. The list provides disposition for these records, some of which only recently became obsolete and must continue to be maintained until their retention periods have been satisfied.

Making and Implementing Policy

1.01 Local Board Policies and Procedures. These are records of all school system policies and procedures mandated by the local board. Examples include uniform policy allowing law enforcement to make periodic visits; uniform policy prohibiting use of tobacco products on school grounds; uniform policy prohibiting weapons; policy on school behavior; policy for admission and attendance; courses of study and offerings of elective courses beyond the core curriculum; policy for adult diploma program; professional development plan; and advisory council guidelines for cooperative vocational education.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

1.02 Improvement Plans. These are self-studies and plans for local schools placed on alert status by the state Department of Education.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

1.03 Local Boards of Education Meeting Records.

- a. **Board meeting minutes/meeting packet.** These are official minutes of meeting of the local board, along with the agenda and any attachments or other documents provided to board members for discussion at the meeting.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

- b. **Committee meeting minutes and related records.** These records document meetings of committees organized by the school board or by local schools. They may include minutes, records of elections to committees, correspondence, and materials reviewed by the committee.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

- c. **Recordings of meetings.** These records are recordings in tape or electronic format of board or other meetings, generally used to assist in preparation of the minutes.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until minutes are approved.

1.04 Administrative Correspondence. This correspondence documents policy development and is created at the policy-making level, for example: between the local superintendent and the state Department of Education, the local superintendent and local school principals, or the local superintendent and the local board of education.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Promoting Child Nutrition

2.01 Child Nutrition Program Operational Records. These records document administration of the child nutrition program. They may include school/school system applications for participation files; policy statement files; free/reduced lunch applications; master lists of applicants; eligibility verification summaries; student and parent involvement forms; food production records; commodity inventory files; food and supplies inventories; equipment inventories; meal count records; reimbursement claims; and nutrition education reports.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit. All claims and finding must be settled before records are destroyed.

2.02 Child Nutrition Program Annual Financial Reports. These are annual reports of a local school system to the state Department of Education, summarizing the net cash resources of the system's child nutrition program and documenting all funds received and disbursed by the program in a particular year.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following the audit period in which the report was created.

Note: For routine financial and personnel records created by the child nutrition program, refer to RDA sections 10 and 11.

2.03 School Food Establishment Inspection Records. These records document the school's compliance with food service facility regulation promulgated by the Alabama Department of Public Health. Original inspection records are retained by the Alabama Department of Public Health and/or county health departments.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.

Providing Student Transportation

3.01 School Bus Monthly Route Reports. These records document the daily service of each school bus or special needs bus on a monthly basis, including schools served and numbers of students transported each morning and afternoon. Other information includes driver's name, bus and route numbers, and reporting period, and (for special needs buses) whether an aide was present on the bus.

- a. **Second month school bus route report (Forms TR-I[b], SNI[b]).** The second monthly route report is submitted annually to the state Department of Education, which maintains the forms in a database and uses them to determine transportation funding.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after the end of the school year in which the record was submitted to the Department of Education.
- b. **Other monthly route reports (Forms TR-I, TR-I[a], SN-I, and SN-I [a]).**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the end of the school year in which the records were created.

3.02 School Bus Safety Records. These records document school bus safety and inspection issues. They include:

- a. **School bus pre-trip inspection records (Forms TR-II, SN-II, TR-II[a], and SN-II [a]).** These records include drivers' daily pre-trip inspections of regular and special needs school buses. Information includes school system, driver's name bus number, and monthly odometer readings, a detailed checklists of bus equipment and fuel usage, and dates. TR-II(a) and SN-II(a) are special forms for extracurricular activities.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the end of the school year in which the records were created.
- b. **Local school system bus inspection reports.** These monthly inspections, required by state law, are conducted by a certified local inspector. They include a checklist of all equipment on the bus.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after the end of the school year in which the record was created.
- c. **Annual School Bus inspection reports.** State law requires an annual inspection of all local school system buses by a state inspector. The record consists of a checklist of all buses equipment and includes exit reports.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the end of the school year in which bus was sold or transferred.

- d. **School vehicle collision reports (Form TR-III).** State law requires local school systems to submit this form to the Department of Education whenever a school bus is involved in an accident. It includes identifying information on the driver, bus, and other vehicle involved; date and location of the accident; weather/road conditions; names and condition of students or other persons injured; names of witnesses; and a diagram of the accident. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following the school year in which the accident occurred.
- e. **School bus illegal passing survey forms (Form TR-V).** The Department of Education conducts an annual survey to collect information on the number of illegal passing of stopped school buses on one day each year. Information on the form includes school system, driver's name, bus number, time of illegal passing, description of vehicle and roadway, and number of students at the stop. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after form was submitted to the Department of Education.
- f. **Emergency evacuation drill forms.** Under federal Guideline 17, local school systems are required to train students on how to evacuate school busses safely in case of an emergency. These records document evacuation drills conducted in the fall and spring. Information includes school system, driver's name, and bus number, and date, type of evacuation, time required, and comments. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the current school year ends.
- g. **School bus student rosters.** These rosters provide a list of all students on the bus, arranged by morning stop number. Information in the records may include, but is not limited to, each student's name, grade/age, morning and afternoon pick-up/drop-off time, and emergency phone number. Rosters may be recorded on forms TR-IV and SN-IV. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after the current school year ends.

3.03 Local Board of Education Transportation Plans. These are comprehensive checklists describing bus transportation provided by local school system; they are submitted annually to the state Department of Education. The records may also include route maps indicating all bus routes and student pick-up points in the system.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

3.04 School Bus Driver Certification Records. These records document the certification of bus drivers employed by the school system.

- a. **School bus driver certification and recertification class rosters.** These records document school bus drivers' completion of initial certification training and annual recertification training, as required by Alabama law. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.

- b. **School bus drivers' certificates.** These are copies of certificates issued to school bus drivers. Under state requirements, certificates must be annually renewed.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after license expiration.
- c. **Reports of bus drivers' physical examinations.** School bus drivers must undergo physical examinations at least every two years, or more often depending on their state of health.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.

3.05 Student Parking Information. These records document approved student parking on school campuses. They may include parking regulations, school or parental permission forms, lists of students allowed to park on campus, vehicle descriptions, and related records.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.

3.06 Student Transportation Arrangements and Related Files. These records document student transportation arrangements authorized by parents/guardians, such as whether students will ride the bus, drive a personal vehicle, or ride with others to and from school. Parents/guardians may also provide an approved list of individuals with whom a student may ride, or who may contact the school regarding a special transportation circumstance.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after the end of the school year in which the records were created.

Documenting Student Attendance

4.01 School Censuses. These are quadrennial reports to the state Department of Education, mandated by the Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-8-31 and 16-11-10. They provide name, age, grade level, gender, and race for each pupil in the county or municipality.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

4.02 20-Day Average Daily Membership Reports (ADM Reports). These reports from local schools to the state Department of Education document attendance during the first 20 days after Labor Day. They are commonly transmitted electronically, with a confirmation report returned from the state department. They replace 40-Day ADM Reports.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

4.03 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Reports. These records, produced in March and April, document automated data collection on school enrollment prior to conducting exit and SAT examinations. They provide accountability reporting for student assessment and the federal "No Child Left Behind" program. Information from these records is incorporated into a master database maintained by the State Department of Education. They replace 120-Day Attendance Reports.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until information has been verified in database.

4.04 Principal's Attendance Reports. These are 40-Day and End-of-Year reports of attendance at the local level, documenting such groupings as high school completers, types of diplomas awarded, students in advanced diploma programs, and students graduating after summer school. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

4.05 Student Dropout Records. Schools document and report student data to the Alabama State Department of Education, tracking figures including drop out. This series includes any documentation for a student who drops out of school. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

4.06 Dropout Reports. These reports are generated at the local school level to document students who cease attending school; they are used to count attendance and also for follow-up by attendance officers. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

4.07 Student Transfer Records. These records document student transfers to another school district within the system. They may also document transfers of students from a public school to a private/church school. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after transfer.

4.08 Pupil/Parent Survey Cards. These information cards are completed by parents or guardians, providing family data that may be used to obtain additional funding for schools. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years.

4.09 Student Check In/Out Logs. These daily logs or records document when students arrived late or left school early; they may include the student's name, arrival/departure/readmission time, and source of permission. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.

4.10 Student Excuses. These are notes or other communications from a student's parent or guardian, indicating the reason for the students' absence. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until end of the school year in which the record was created.

4.11 Attendance Records for Home-Schooled Students. The records document that a student is enrolled in and attending an approved church school-sponsored program or a program instructed by a certified teacher. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until student reaches age 16.

4.12 Student Schedule Cards. These records list each student's class schedule and may contain other information, such as the student's locker combination and Social Security number. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until end of the school year in which the record was created.

4.13 Records Documenting Student Attendance as Required by the Alabama State Department of Education that Are Not Specified Elsewhere.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

4.14 Student Attendance Records Not Specified Elsewhere. These records document student enrollment and attendance in public schools. They may include, but are not limited to, daily, monthly, quarterly, or other periodical attendance reports.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until the end of the school year.

Promoting School/Student Safety, Health, and Discipline

5.01 Student Incident Reports. These are reports to the local superintendent, filed by a school principal, documenting student misconduct that results in suspension, expulsion, or other major disciplinary action. Examples might include damage to school property or physical assaults by students on teachers, staff, or other students. Disposition is as follows:

a. **School board copy.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years.

b. **Local school copy.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain in student discipline file.

5.02 Office Referrals/Teacher Reports. These are reports of minor disciplinary incidents that result in the student being sent to the school office.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.

5.03 Student Discipline Files. These records document the discipline histories of individual students. Maintained by local schools, they may include incident reports; teacher reports; and hearing officer letters, reports, and recommendations.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until student reaches age 21.

5.04 Surveillance and Disciplinary Recordings. These records include audio, video, or other recorded media that provide “live” documentation of events at schools or other board of education facilities. They may also include recordings of disciplinary or other hearings held at the school or board of education.

a. **School surveillance recordings.** These recordings monitor the conduct and safety of students and teachers, as well as the condition of school or board of education facilities and property.

i. Recorded information that does not become part of a case file.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

ii. Recorded information that becomes part of a case file.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until final disposition of any litigation or legal case for which the recording provides evidence, whichever is longer.

- b. **Recordings of due process disciplinary hearings.** These records include audio, video, or other recordings of hearings held at the school board of education for students facing long-term suspension or expulsion from school because of disciplinary matters.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until student's graduation or withdrawal from the school system, or until final disposition of any litigation, whichever is longer.

5.05 Behavior Policy/Code of Conduct Records. These are copies of written school policy on student behavior; they are signed annually for each student by the parent or guardian.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

5.06 Monthly Suspension Data Reports. These are the attendance officer's monthly summaries of student suspensions from all schools in the system.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

5.07 Truancy Case Files. These records, case files on individual students, document instances of truancy and efforts to correct this behavior. Information in the records may include reports of student truancy, referrals to Early Warning programs, court petitions for repeated truants, and reports of truants attending Early Warning meetings or court sessions.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until student reaches age 21.

5.08 Attendance Officer Annual Reports. These are reports from attendance officers to the local board of education (mandated by the Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-28-13) documenting "all notices served, all cases prosecuted and all other services performed." They may also include statistics on dropouts, suspensions, and expulsions.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

5.09 Student Drug-Testing and Drug-Free Education Records. These records document the board of education's efforts to reduce student drug and alcohol abuse through a system of drug testing and anti-drug use education.

- a. **Records documenting school/board of education policy on student drug testing and education.**
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
- b. **Positive student drug or alcohol test results, documentation of student refusals to take tests, documentation of student referrals to and treatment in substance abuse programs.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.
- c. **Negative student drug or alcohol test results.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.
- d. **Records related to the collection process.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.

- e. **Safe and drug-free school records.** These records pertain to a federally-funded program that sponsors a variety of activities and initiatives to promote safety and discourage Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after completion of activity.

5.10 Student Accident Reports. These are reports of accidents occurring on school grounds, in the school building, or off-campus while a student is participating in a school activity. They contain identifying information about the student, a description of the accident, and actions taken.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

5.11 School Health Assessment Records/Emergency Contact Cards. These records are completed by parents to provide student medical information and indicate individuals to be notified in case of student accident or illness. New records are completed each year.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded or until student leaves school.

5.12 Student Health Records. These records document student health information, Individualized Healthcare Plans, Emergency Action Plans, and Prescriber/Parent Medication Authorizations, as well as parental permission forms or letters.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until student reaches age 21.

5.13 School Nurse Daily Health Logs. These log lists students admitted to the school health center and document all actions taken by school nurses in providing treatment, administering medicines, contacting parents, etc.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until all students listed reach age 21.

5.14 Students Driver's License Enrollment Records. These records include copies of school forms indicating students' status and reports of student enrollment verification. They are sent to the Department of Public Safety, pursuant to the Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-28-40 through 16-28-45.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years.

5.15 Underage Student Work Permit Records. These are school system reports to the Department of Industrial Relations; they provide information about underage students who are working.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.

5.16 Student Locker Information. These records document student locker assignments. They may include forms, lists of assignments, and work orders for repairs.

- a. **Work orders (see RDA item 12.09).**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

- b. **All other records.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.

5.17 After-School Program Records. These records document after-school programs conducted by the school system or its service vendors.

- a. **After-school program agreements.** These records are service agreements between the board of education agencies that provide after-school care for its students.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after expiration of agreement.
- b. **After-school program administrative records.** These records document routine activities of after-school programs at schools within the system. The series may include such records as students' registration forms, attendance logs, staff sign-in sheets, educational or recreational materials, and reports on program activities or food served to students.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

Note: Some administrative records of after-school programs may be covered in the Administering Internal Operations sections (9-12) of this RDA.

Conveying Knowledge

6.01 Student Handbooks. Handbooks created annually or periodically by some schools to explain school policies and procedures, regulations, course offerings, graduation requirements, and sometimes student activities.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. (2 copies of each issue.) Retain additional copies until superseded.

6.02 Local Textbook Selection Committee Files. These files include minutes and lists of selected textbooks for the local school system. Textbooks are chosen from lists provided by the state Department of Education.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years.

6.03 Daily/Weekly Teacher Lesson Plans. These plans provide documentation of teaching plans. Maintained in a variety of formats, they include subject, class period, and activity project.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after the end of the school year in which the records were created.

6.04 Special Education Programs.

- a. **Operational records.** These records provide subsidiary documentation of day-to-day program operations. They include referrals for programs, teacher assignments, correspondence, reports, and student papers.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years.
- b. **Documentation of selection and placement requirements.** These records provide core documentation of admission criteria and program elements and requirements. They include admission procedures, eligibility and acceptance guidelines, and mission statements.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Note: For the information on proper destruction procedures for these records, as established by federal and state authorities, see 20 U.S.C. 1412 (a)(8), 14179(c); and the Alabama Administrative Code, Chapter 290-8-9-.08(2)(h).

6.05 Gifted and Talented Programs.

- a. **Operational records.** These records provide subsidiary documentation of day-to-day program operations. They include referrals for programs, teacher assignments, correspondence, reports, and student papers.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years.
- b. **Documentation of selection and placement requirements.** These records provide core documentation of admission criteria and program elements and requirements. They include admission procedures, eligibility and acceptance guidelines, and mission statements.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

6.06 Magnet Schools.

- a. **Operational Records.** These records provide subsidiary documentation of day-to-day program operations. They include referrals for programs, teacher assignments, correspondence, reports, and student papers.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years.
- b. **Documentation of selection and placement requirements.** These records provide core documentation of admission criteria and program elements and requirements. They include admission procedures, eligibility and acceptance guidelines, and mission statements.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

6.07 Vocational Education.

- a. **Operational records.** These records provide subsidiary documentation of day-to-day program operations. They include referrals for programs, teacher assignments, correspondence, reports, and student papers.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years.
- b. **Documentation of selection and placement requirements.** These records provide core documentation of admission criteria and program elements and requirements. They include admission procedures, eligibility and acceptance guidelines, and mission statements.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

6.08 Adult and Community Education.

- a. **Operational records.** These records provide subsidiary documentation of day-to-day program operations. They include referrals for programs, teacher assignments, correspondence, reports, and student papers.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years.
- b. **Documentation of selection and placement requirements.** These records provide core documentation of admission criteria and program elements and requirements. They include admission procedures, eligibility and acceptance guidelines, and mission statements.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
- c. **Course offerings.** These are lists of courses offered for each term and associated publicity (brochures, newspaper advertisements).
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

6.09 Service Plans. These plans are required by the state Department of Education. They are formulated by the local board to designate how educational services will be provided for such target groups as students with disabilities, gifted students, vocational education students, and at-risk students.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

6.10 School Library/Media Center Records.

- a. **Catalog of holdings.** Catalogs provide a continuously updated list of the library's holdings.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.
- b. **Library/media center operational files.** These records document such activities as accessioning; circulation; patron requests, assistance, and complaints; and collecting fines.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

Evaluating Performance and Conferring Credentials

7.01 Student Records. These are the official records of individual students for their period of enrollment at a school. Information in student records *may* include identifying information, immunization data, standardized test scores, writing assessment results, cumulative card, health information, legal records, English as a Second Language (ESL) records, final report card, and graduation/termination data. Access to these records is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (34 CFR 99.3).

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Note: It is not the legal mandate of the Local Government Records Commission to set policy concerning the contents of student records. This is a matter for the local school board to decide,

in consultation with the state Department of Education.

Note: The local board has the responsibility to maintain student records of any nonpublic school that discontinues operation and has no higher administrative office, as well as those of closed public schools. Under the Private Tutor Law, student records of home-schooled children are also reported to the board, as required by the Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-28-5.

7.02 Special Education Student Records. These records are created for each student enrolled in a special education program; this includes identifying information, parental consent forms, and most current eligibility documentation.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after the termination of the special education program for which they were used.

Note: Under this revised disposition, the state Department of Education has directed that on January 1, 2014, all records from January 1, 2009 and back may be destroyed, regardless of whether the student is active or inactive in the school system.

7.03 Gifted and Talented Student Records. These records are created for each student enrolled in a gifted and talented program; this includes identifying information and parental consent forms.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after student graduates or reaches age 18.

7.04 School Psychologist/Psychometric Files. These records, such as testing files, are created by the school system psychologist or psychometrics.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after student leaves the school system.

7.05 Grade Books and Supporting Documentation. These records provide documentation by teachers of students' academic progress. Grade books include the teacher's name, class, names of students, and their grades. The series may also include tests, essays, and other assignments not returned to students, as well as unclaimed report cards and "cumulative cards," "final grade cards," and other subsidiary grade reports or summaries retained by the school for recording grade information into student records.

- a. **Grade books, unclaimed report cards, and school's reports or summaries of grade information.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after entry of grades in student records.

- b. **Supporting documentation (tests, essays, other assignments).**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

7.06 Standardized Examination Records. These are materials related to the administering of standardized examinations (Stanford Achievement Test, Alabama High School Graduation Examination, etc.). They may include examination results.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after posting of examination scores to student records.

7.07 Student Remediation Files. These records document assistance, instruction, and remediation provided to students who fail the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE).

- a. **Students passing the AHSGE by the end of their 12th grade.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after graduation.
- b. **Students not passing the AHSGE by the end of their 12th grade.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after successful completion of the AHSGE or student's last attempt.

7.08 Requests for Transcripts. These records document requests from current and former students for copies of their records to be sent to other educational institutions or employers and the response to such requests. Requests go to the school, if it is still in existence, or to the school board if the school has closed.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

7.09 Special Education Portfolio Files. If these records are created for students, they demonstrate the student's work to potential employers.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after student graduates with a diploma or exits school.

7.10 Guidance Counselor/Advisor Files. These records document efforts by local school teachers and/or guidance counselors to advise students on academic progress, career plans, social problems, or other concerns. They may include policy statements as well as files on individual students.

- a. **Policy statements on guidance counseling/advising students.**
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
- b. **Student files and related correspondence.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until student reaches age 21.
- c. **Student course and schedule requests, course and schedule changes, and elective sheets.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after graduation.

7.11 Title 1 Pre-K[indergarten] and K[indergarten] Screening Files. These records document the screening of preschoolers or kindergarten-age children to determine their educational level before entering school.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

7.12 Student Registration Forms. These forms formally document a student's intent to attend a certain school for the coming academic year and may also indicate his/her proposed class schedule.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until the end of the corresponding school year.

7.13 Student Residence Forms. School eligibility in many districts is dependent upon place of residence; as such, students are required to provide proof of residence on an annual basis. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.

Sponsoring Student Activities

8.01 Athletic Program Records. These records document the school's compliance with state regulations and requirements of applicable athletic associations. They may include student eligibility records, birth certificates, physical examination forms, parental consent forms, waivers, application forms, schedules, participation requirements, and related records. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

8.02 Student Activities History Files. These records offer historical documentation of student clubs and organizations, events, publications, contests and competitions, elections, sports, and cultural activities. They may include newspaper clippings, student newspapers, yearbooks, photographs, video and audiotapes, meeting minutes, programs, and publicity materials. Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Note: Archivists recommend that the school librarian collect these records to document the history of the school.

8.03 Student Activities Working Files. These records include notes, designs, graphics, drafts, photographs, and other materials created in the preparation of final publications such as yearbooks, programs, and publicity materials. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

8.04 Student Activities Administrative Files. These records provide routine financial or administrative documentation related to school activities, such as individual student government elections, cheerleader tryouts, or club/organization fund-raising events. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

8.05 Parent or Guardian Authorization/Permission Files. These records document parent or guardian approval or disapproval for students to engage in school-related activities. These records may include, but are not limited to, field trip permission forms and media release forms. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after conclusion of the activity.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing the Agency

9.01 Local Board of Education Internal Policies and Procedures. These records document internal policies and procedures, such as carrying out state policies, hiring personnel, standardizing and grading public schools, and managing finances. Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

9.02 Local School System Historical Files.

- a. **Board of Education historical files.** These records may include scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, ledgers, photographs, videotapes, or volumes compiling historical information about the school system.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Note: Records may be retained in office or transferred to a local library, archives, or historical society under a records deposit agreement.

- b. **Local school news bulletins/announcements.** These are daily news bulletins or “morning announcements” routinely read over the intercom at local schools. While most matters covered are of ephemeral importance, collectively the records provide a day-to-day history of school events.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Note: The disposition requirement applies to one file copy. Duplicate copies may be destroyed without notice.

9.03 Publicity and Informational Materials. These records may include news releases, newsletters, brochures, periodicals, photographs, videotapes, speeches, and public service announcements.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

9.04 Board Appointment Records. These records provide official documentation of the appointment of school board members.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following the audit period in which the term in office expires.

9.05 Official Bonds and Oaths. Bonds are required of local superintendents and chief financial officers by the Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-9-3.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following the audit period in which the term of office expires.

9.06 Accreditation Reports.

- a. **Records documenting the local school re-accreditation process.** This process is carried out every five years by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Records consist of self-evaluation and school review team reports for each school in a system.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. One copy of the report may be retained either by the school board or by the school itself.
- b. **Interim reports.** Interim reports are prepared annually during the five-year accreditation period.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until next five-year report is issued.

- c. **Internal Documentation.** Staff may produce meeting notes, memoranda, and other documentation as each school undergoes re-accreditation.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until next five-year report is issued.

9.07 Annual Reports. These are yearly summaries of local board of education activities; they include the State Superintendent's Annual Report Card for the school system and accountability reports, as specified by the Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-6B-7.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

9.08 Board Meeting Notices. These records provide official notification of the time and place of regular and special meetings of the school board.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

9.09 Internal Ballots and Related Files. These records document the use of internal secret ballots for purposes such as electing members of budget committees and approving the budget for state allocation funds.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

9.10 Routine Correspondence. This correspondence related to day-to-day operations of the local school or board of education.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

9.11 Administrative Reference Files. These materials are not created by the local school or board; they are collected and used only as reference sources of information.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

9.12 Legal Case Files. These records provide documentation of civil law suits filed by or against the school system and hearings conducted by the board of education.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after case is closed. Offer files with historical significance to a local library, archives, or historical society.

9.13 Records Management Documentation.

- a. **Records destruction notices.** These notices document the legal destruction of disposable records.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- b. **Records management materials.** These records include records management plans, record inventories, indices, and finding aids.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.
- c. **Copy of approved RDA.** RDAs provide legal guidelines for the disposition of all agency records. Each local board should maintain a signed copy of the RDA and distribute copies to all schools in the system.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following the audit period in which the RDA was superseded.

d. **Local records deposit agreements.** These are formal agreements executed by some school systems that allow a local records repository (such as a library, archives, or historical society) to maintain the board's long-term records. They include inventories of records in the repository.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after termination of the agreement.

e. **Records request forms.** A board of education may ask visitors wishing to examine records to complete identification forms before providing access. Information in such forms may include visitor's name and contact information, date and time of requests, records requested, and reason for request, and staff comments.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit or until any resulting litigation is concluded.

9.14 Computer Systems Documentation. These files include hardware and software manuals and diskettes, and warranties.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain former system documentation 2 years after the audit period in which the former hardware and software no longer exists anywhere in the agency and all permanent records have been migrated to the new system.

9.15 Websites and Social Media. Web and social media sites are developed by local boards of education to respond to public inquiries and provide information about local education facilities and services. Materials may include location contact information for school board offices and schools, school calendars, lists of school officials, registration information, school board policies, event updates, photographs of current activities, and transportation information.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. Preserve a complete copy of the sites annually, or as often as significant changes are made.

9.16 Mailing Lists. These are various standard lists of names and addresses used by local boards and individual schools.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

9.17 Mail, Telephone, and Fax Machine Contacts Logs. These are lists of telephone and fax machine contacts and related data.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

9.18 Calendars. These are desk calendars and other scheduling devices for local school officials.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Finances

10.01 Budgeting Records. These records document the preparation of a budget request package, reporting the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance.

- a. **Approved annual budget.** This is the final version of the budget approved by the board of education during the school year.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Note: If budget is included with the board minutes, retain additional copies for useful life.

- b. **Original and amended (but not final) budgets.** These are earlier versions of the annual budget, both the version initially approved by the board of education and later (but not final) revisions, as amended during the school year.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- c. **School/departmental budget estimates and requests.** These records are submitted by individual schools or departments and used in preparation of the budget package (See the Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-1-8.1).
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- d. **Records documenting budget performance during the budget cycle (budgeted vs. actual revenue reports, revenue report, investment reports, expenditure reports, encumbrance reports, etc.).**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

10.02 Audit Reports. These records include both independent audits and Examiners of Public Accounts' audits of local boards of education, as well as internal audits of local schools by the school system, if those audits contain financial information.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

10.03 Accounting Records.

- a. **Routine accounting records.** These are records of original entry, such as journals, registers, and subsidiary ledgers; and records of deposits of funds, including cancelled checks, check stubs, deposit slips, and other banking records, receipt books and reports of the Child Nutrition Program, as well as student fundraisers for the school or school district.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

Note: For routine accounting records created under federal grant projects, see record series Grant Project Files.

Records Management Recommendation: Returned checks, or other records documenting the school system's efforts to collect unpaid taxes, fees, or service charges, should be retained 5 years or until settlement of all claims due. The Code of Alabama 1975 § 6-2-35 sets 5 years as the statute of limitations on collecting "amounts claimed for licenses, franchise taxes, or other taxes."

- b. **General Ledgers and detailed year-end trial balances.** These are records of final entry for all financial transactions: collecting fees and other revenue, purchasing, investing, administering state and federal funds, and general accounting. These records include the annual financial statement electronically submitted by the board to the State Department of Education.
 - i. Records created prior to 1975.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
 - ii. Records created in or after 1975.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.
- c. **Local school's copies of general ledgers and trial balances.**
 - i. If identical to copy submitted to board of education.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.
 - ii. If not identical to copy submitted to board of education.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

10.04 Purchasing Records. These records document the requisitioning and purchasing of supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods and services, and authorizing payment for products. Records in this series may include, but are not limited to, purchase orders, quotes, invoices, purchasing card receipts, and receiving reports. These records also include purchasing records for the Child Nutrition Program.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

10.05 Records of Formal Bids. These records document the bid process, including requests for proposals and unsuccessful responses.

- a. **Records documenting bids or services obtained by local boards of education.** These records include requests for bid proposals, successful and unsuccessful bids by product or service vendors, and related correspondence.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 7 years after the date bids were opened (Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-13B-4[d]).

- b. **Lists of eligible bidders.** Boards of education may compile lists of eligible bidders or businesses who have filed requests to be notified of bids on projects, products, or services required by the school system.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after last contact with listed vendors.

Note: Requests from bidders to be included in the lists may be treated as Routine Correspondence.

- c. **Correspondence with vendors slated for removal from the lists of eligible bidders.** Under the Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-13B-4(a), any listed bidder who fails to respond after receiving three solicitations for bids may be stricken from the eligible lists. This corresponded documents the school boards efforts to warn unresponsive vendors that they will be dropped from the lists unless they ask to remain eligible. It includes forms or letters sent by the board and any responses from the vendors.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the audit period in which the bidder is removed from the list.

10.06 Contracts, Leases, Franchises, and Agreements. These records document the negotiation, fulfillment, and termination of all contracts, leases, franchises, and agreements entered into by the board of education, including final contracts that are subject to the bid process.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after termination or expiration of contract.

10.07 Debt Issuance Records. These records document warrants issued by the local board and its adherence to all applicable laws regarding issuance.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit period in which final payment was made.

10.08 Grant Project Files. These files document the school board's application for and conduct of grant projects funded by local, state, federal, or private sources. Disposition is as follows:

- a. **Financial reports, interim narrative reports, and correspondence.** These records include financial reports, interim narrative reports, background materials, and other non-financial supporting documentation for grants awarded. Also included are records relating to unsuccessful grant applications.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after submission of final report or denial application.

- b. **Subsidiary financial records.** These records include accounting or purchasing records and any other subsidiary financial documentation of federal grants, including financial reports. (See federal Rule 1354.)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after submission of final financial report.

Note: Subsidiary financial records produced under certain federal grants may be subject to longer retention periods (e.g., 5 years). In these cases, school system grant administrators should follow the applicable federal requirement.

- c. **Final narrative reports.** Final narrative summaries are submitted according to the requirements of the funding agency. They summarize the goals of the grant, how the money was used, and what was accomplished.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

10.09 Travel Records. These records document requests for authorization from supervisors to travel on official business and related material, such as travel reimbursement forms and itineraries.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

10.10 Employer Tax Returns and Related Files. These records include, but are not limited to, employer state tax returns, federal tax returns, local tax returns, unemployment quarterly reports, and Federal Forms 1099. These records do not pertain to individual employees but instead describe the local government agency as a whole.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Human Resources

11.01 LEAPS/SLEAPS Reports. These computer-generated reports document all employees working in a particular school system; they are submitted annually to the state Department of Education.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

11.02 Job Recruitment Materials. These records document efforts by the local boards to advertise positions and attract qualified personnel.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the position is filled.

11.03 Position Classification and Pay Plans. These records document job classifications for positions in the school system. They include job titles, qualifications, duties, and pay ranges for all positions.

Dispositions: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after position was reclassified.

11.04 Certification Records. These records document the process of certifying applicants for employment. They pertain to individuals deemed qualified for school system positions after submitting an application and taking an employment examination.

- a. **Employment registers.** These records are lists of individuals declared qualified for certain positions. They include job classifications, names of eligible applicants, and their ranking on the certification list.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after superseded.
- b. **Employee certification files.** These records document the certification process with individual job applicants. They include questionnaires, training and experience records, grades, notifications, and returned postcards and letters.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

- c. **Expired certificates.** These records include expired certificates for teachers and other professional employees of the school system.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after expiration.

11.05 Request for Professional/Support Staff Positions. These records document requests for personnel submitted by individual schools/offices and subsequent reviewing and/or approval actions taken by the local board staff.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

11.06 Employment Applications. These records document applications for employment that are maintained for consideration when vacancies arise. They also include rejected applications, applications for transfer, and applications for promotion.

- a. **Successful applications.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain in employee personnel file.
- b. **Unsuccessful applications.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.
- c. **I-9 forms.** These federal forms are used to verify that persons seeking employment are eligible to work in the United States. Disposition of the employing agency's copy is provided by 8 CFR 274a.2.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after employment or 1 year after termination, whichever is longer.

11.07 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Files. These records document the school system's compliance with regulations of the EEOC; they include EEOC Forms 168A and 168B.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

11.08 Employee Personnel Files. These records document an employee's work history with the school system. They are generally maintained as case files and include records of continuing education, performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, background checks, payroll deductions, and leave and salary documentation.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee.

11.09 Substitute Teachers' Files. These files document the hiring and employment of substitute teachers, who are not regular employees of the board of education. They may include approval certificates documenting substitutes' qualifications, and personnel files of substitutes actually employed by the school system. Disposition of the records is as follows:

- a. **Unsuccessful applications (includes applicants certified but not employed).**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

Note: Retain applications of employed substitutes in their personnel files.

- b. **Substitute teachers' personnel files.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after last employment.
- c. **Copies of approval certificates for qualified substitutes.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after expiration.
- d. **Certification files (lists of certified substitute teachers and related correspondence).**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

11.10 Contract Employees' Files. These files document the hiring of contract employees by the board of education. Contract employees may be employed by the school system to provide special services on a short-term basis.

- a. **Unsuccessful Applications.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

Note: Retain applications of hired contract employees in their personnel files.

- b. **I-9 forms.** These federal forms are used to verify that persons seeking employment are eligible to work in the United States. Disposition of the employing agency's copy is provided by 8 CFR 274a.2.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after employment or 1 year after termination, whichever is longer.
- c. **Contract employees' personnel files.** These files may include credentials submitted with the initial application, descriptions of duties, and evaluations of the employee's job performance.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after last employment.
- d. **Payroll records for contract workers (includes W-9 forms to verify employment for tax purposes).**
Disposition: Retain 2 years following audit.

11.11 Employee Handbooks. Handbooks are created by local system to explain internal operations and procedures to new employees.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

11.12 Employee Newsletters. Internal newsletters are created by the local system to communicate news and important events to employees.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

11.13 Payroll Records.

- a. **Salary and wage records.** These records include pre-payroll reports, payroll registers, monthly fund distribution reports, and payroll action forms.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

- b. **Payroll deduction authorizations.** These records document individual employee authorizations (such as W-4 forms) to withhold taxes and other deductions from the employee's pay.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee from the school system.
- c. **Payroll deduction records.** These records (including W-2 Forms and deduction registers) document taxes; retirement contributions; and all other deductions, including PEEHIP, that are withheld from employees' pay.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- d. **Teacher retirement contribution reports.** These records document the amount of teacher retirement contributions deducted from salaries of local system teachers and staff.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of the employee from the school system.
- e. **Annual payroll earnings reports.** These are summaries of employees' payroll earnings for a fiscal year, including all deductions. They include Form 941.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 50 years after the end of the tax year in which the records were created.

11.14 Employee "Cafeteria Plan" (Flexible Benefits) Records. These records document salary reduction-type plans authorized by the Internal Revenue Service Code, Section 125.

- a. **General information about the plan.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.
- b. **Subsidiary documentation (applications, reports, and correspondence).**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after termination of participation in plan.

11.15 Work Schedule Records. These records document employees' daily and weekly work schedules.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

11.16 Leave and Attendance Records.

- a. **Individual employee leave and attendance records (including time sheets).** These records document hours worked, leave earned, and leave taken by the individual employees.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- b. **Employee cumulative leave/attendance records.** These records document the final leave status (cumulative leave) of individual employees; they include the Annual Employee Leave Report.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after separation of the employee from the school system.

- c. **Employee sick leave donation records.** These records document the donation of sick leave to their colleagues by employees.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

11.17 Medical Leave Act 9 (FMLA) Records. These records document administration of the FMLA program, including leave taken, premium payments, employer notices, and correspondence.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

11.18 Affordable Care Act Compliance Files. These records encompass the documentation submitted to the federal government to demonstrate compliance with the Affordable Care Act.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after submission.

11.19 Unemployment Compensation Records. This documentation is related to employee claims for unemployment compensation.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following the audit period in which the transaction occurred.

11.20 On-the-Job Injury Records. These records document claims and payment of employees for on-the-job injuries or job-related disabilities covered under the Code of Alabama 1975 § 16-1-18.1(d).
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after closure of the incident and settlement of all claims due.

11.21 Training Records. These records document the school system's provision of in-service training and professional development for its employees. They do not include materials obtained from outside sources. Disposition is as follows:

- a. **Training standards, policies, procedures, and publications.** These records document the system's overall standards, policies, and procedures in providing specialized training to its employees. They may include general policy statements or guidelines, training manuals, or related publications.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
- b. **Training administrative files.** These records document the process of conducting training for employees. They may include individual lesson plans, audiovisual presentations or materials, lists of attendance at workshops or training sessions, sign-in sheets, unpublished handouts, and appraisals of training completed by participants.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

11.22 “Drug-Free Workplace” Records. These records document the school system’s substance abuse policies and programs, as well as drug and alcohol testing of employees. Under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, such medical-related records may not be included in Employee Personnel Files. They are generally governed by the requirements of 49 CFR Ch. VI 655.71 (10-1-05 edition). Retention periods are as follows:

- a. **Drug/alcohol abuse policy and procedures documentation.**
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
- b. **Positive employee drug or alcohol test results documentation of employee refusals to take tests, documentation of employee referrals and treatment in substance abuse programs, copies of system’s annual MIS reports submitted to FTA.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.
- c. **Records related to the collection process and employee training.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.
- d. **Negative employee drug or alcohol test results.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

11.23 Reports of Employees Required to File Statements of Economic Interest. These records include reports to the Alabama Ethics Commission, and related transmittal letters, copies of statements, and correspondence, pertaining to the filing of Statements of Economic Interest by school system employees. The reports contain the names of employees who are required to file Statements of Economic Interest.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years.

11.24 Employee Statements of Compliance with Administrative Policies. These records document employees’ compliance with administrative policies and procedures set by the board of education. Such forms or statements, which may be periodically updated, can provide the employee or the school system with legal protection in case of disciplinary actions or litigation arising from violations of board policies.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after employee separation.

Note: If compliance statements are periodically updated, the Alabama Attorney General’s Office recommends that all copies, not just the most recent, be retained in the employee’s personnel file.

11.25 Employee Assistance Program Files. These are administrative records documenting the referral of employees to various assistance programs and subsequent services provided.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources

12.01 Annual Inventory Records. These records document all personal property, equipment, or capital outlay by the board on an annual basis; they also include inventories of textbooks. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

12.02 Receipts of Responsibility for Property. These records document school board property that is temporarily in the use or possession of an employee or student. They include receipts for textbooks issued to students. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until return of item to the property manager.

12.03 School Construction Project Files. These records document all activities pertaining to the planning and construction of educational facilities.

- a. **As-built plans, specifications, and blueprints of buildings of significant historical interest.**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Note: Retain in office for life of the facility. Records may then be offered to a local library, archives, or other historical repository under the terms of a local government records deposit agreement.

- b. **As-built plans, specifications, and blueprints of buildings of buildings lacking significant historical interest.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for life of the facility.

- c. **Preliminary plans, specifications, and blueprints.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

12.04 Real Property Ownership Records. These are deeds and supporting documentation for land owned by the school system.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following the audit period in which the property was sold or transferred.

12.05 Real Property Leasing/Rental Records. These records document the leasing and renting of land, buildings, or facilities by the school system.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the lease or rental agreement was terminated.

12.06 Insurance Policies and Claims.

- a. **Insurance policies.** These policies document all insurance policies carried by the agency. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the policy was terminated.

- b. **Insurance claims.** These records document insurance claims filed by the local government agency.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the audit period in which the claim was settled.
- c. **Certificates of liability.** These records provide proof of insurance. Certificates are typically valid for a period of one year or less.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.

12.07 Facilities/Buildings Security Records. These records document the carrying out of security measures and procedures by the school system in its buildings and facilities; they include visitor logs.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

12.08 Facilities/Buildings Inspection Files and Reports. These records document inspections of schools and board facilities to comply with the standards, rules, and codes affecting the health and safety occupants. They include fire and tornado drill reports, security inspections, and safety inspections.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

12.09 Facilities/Buildings Safety Plans and Training Files.

- a. **Safety plans.** These records document the manner in which agency staff are directed to respond in emergencies. Examples of safety plans include, but are not limited to, fire evacuation protocols, severe weather plans, and active shooter protocols.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.
- b. **Training files.** These records document the training and practice undertaken by staff to implement safety plans. Examples of training and practice include, but are not limited to, fire drills, tornado drills, and bomb threat drills.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

12.10 Building Maintenance Work Orders. These records document routine maintenance on board of education facilities and property.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

12.11 Vehicle and Equipment Ownership and Maintenance Files. These records document the ownership and maintenance of all vehicles and other equipment owned or maintained by the school system. They may include titles, bills of sale, repair records, gasoline usage reports, and related correspondence.

- a. **Ownership records (titles, bills of sale, etc.).**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following the audit period in which equipment or vehicle is removed from inventory.

- b. **Maintenance Files (work orders, repair or gasoline usage records, and related financial records).**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

12.12 Motor Pool Records. These records document reservations and use of motor pool vehicles by board of education personnel.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

12.13 Employee Parking Records. These records document employee parking permit applications, cards, and permits.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

Records No Longer Created

Note: Any local board of education record created prior to 1900, whether or not it is specifically listed here, is a permanent record and may not be destroyed.

13.01 Four Months Attendance Reports/Attendance Profiles (formerly LG-6-4-9). These records documented the average daily attendance, enrollment, and number of students using transportation for each school.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

13.02 Final Cumulative Attendance Reports (formerly LG-6-4-10). These records documented the total number of children attending school on a daily basis. They include average daily attendance.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years.

13.03 School Registers/Teachers' Registers/Promotion Registers (formerly LG-6-4-15).

These records, created by teachers, documented students in each class each year. They may have included attendance information, recommendations for promotion, and additional comments.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

13.04 Court-Ordered Busing Plans and Maps. These records included: overall plans or maps designating (1) which neighborhoods or areas were served by each school in the system, and (2) bus routes. They were created in response to court orders imposed in an effort to achieve racial balance in the public schools.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

13.05 40-Day Average Daily Membership Reports (ADM Reports). These reports from local schools to the state Department of Education documented attendance during the first 40 days of the school year. They were replaced by a 20-day version of ADM reports.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

13.06 120-Day Attendance Reports. These records documented automated data collection on school enrollment and provided basic accountability reporting for student assessment. Information from the records was incorporated into a master database maintained by the state Department of Education. They have been replaced by Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Reports.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until information has been verified in database.

Requirement and Recommendations for Implementing the Records Disposition Authority (RDA)

Requirement

Under the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-13-23, “no county, municipal, or other local government official, shall cause any. . . record to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of without first obtaining the approval of the local government records commission.” This RDA constitutes authorization by the Local Government Records Commission to dispose of records as stipulated, with the condition that the responsible official must submit a Local Government Records Destruction Notice to the ADAH Government Records Division to document the destruction. The ADAH, which serves as the commission’s staff, retains local records destruction documentation as a permanent record.

Recommendations

In addition, the Agency should make every effort to establish and maintain a quality record-keeping program by conducting the following activities:

The Agency should designate a staff member in a managerial position as its records liaison/records manager, who is responsible for: ensuring the development of quality record keeping systems that meet the business and legal needs of the agency, coordinating the transfer and destruction of records, ensuring that permanent records held on alternative storage media (such as microforms and digital imaging systems) are maintained in compliance with national and state standards, and ensuring the regular implementation of the agency’s approved RDA.

Permanent records in the Agency’s custody should be maintained under proper intellectual control and in an environment that will ensure their physical order and preservation.

Destruction of temporary records, as authorized in this RDA, should occur agency-wide on a regular basis—for example, after the successful completion of an audit, at the end of an administration, or at the end of a fiscal year. Despite the RDA’s provisions, no record should be destroyed that is necessary to comply with requirements of the Open Meetings Act, audit requirements, or any legal notice or subpoena.

The agency should maintain full documentation of any computerized record-keeping system it employs. It should develop procedures for: (1) backing up all permanent records held in electronic format; (2) storing a back-up copy off-site; and (3) migrating all permanent records when the system is upgraded or replaced. If the agency chooses to maintain permanent records solely in electronic format, it is committed to funding any system upgrades and migration strategies necessary to ensure the records’ permanent preservation and accessibility.

Electronic mail contains permanent, temporary, or transitory record information. Although e-mail records can be printed out, filed, and retained according to the RDA’s requirements, the office should preferably employ an electronic records management system capable of sorting e-

mail into folders and archiving messages having long-term value.

The staff of the Local Government Records Commission or the Examiners of Public Accounts may examine the condition of the permanent records maintained in the custody of the Agency and inspect records destruction documentation. Agency records managers and/or the ADAH archivists are available to instruct the staff in RDA implementation and otherwise assist the Agency in implementing its records management program.

The Local Government Records Commission adopted this Records Disposition Authority on October 28, 2020.

Steve Murray, Chairman
Local Government Records Commission

Date

By signing below, the agency acknowledges receipt of the retention periods and requirements established by the records disposition authority.

Superintendent
Board of Education

Date

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