Helena Elementary School 2023-2024 Handbook



Welcome to Helena Elementary School!

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Helena Elementary School! We are excited to welcome each of you to the 2023-2024 school year. Our partnership will grow our students in all areas, including academics and behavior.

Our teachers have high expectations and provide quality instruction to students to help them meet their goals. They use best practices to promote hands-on learning and higher level thinking. In May of 2023, most of our teachers completed the two year training in LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling). Those who have not completed the training will either be in Year 1 or Year 2 this year. They are all to be commended for their commitment to growing professionally.

One strength of HES is the high level of parent involvement. Our PTO is crucial to the success of our school, from sponsoring school-wide events to volunteering during the school day. We seek to foster the parent-school partnership through communication and participation in school events and hope you will be a part of our team!

Mrs. Holcomb, our principal, has 30 years of experience in education with 20 of those in administration. She earned her Education Specialist degree and a Master's degree in Educational Administration from Samford University. Mrs. Holcomb earned a Master's degree and a Bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Montevallo. This is Mrs. Holcomb's third year at HES! She is a long-time resident of Helena and is happy to serve the children and families of her hometown.

Mrs. April Maner, previously our Administrative Assistant, is our new Assistant Principal this year. Mrs. Maner has a bachelor's degree in Human Environmental Sciences (Interior Design) from the University of Alabama, a master's degree in Elementary Education, and a certification in Instructional Leadership, and most recently completed her Education Specialist degree in Instructional Technology from the University of Montevallo. Mrs. Maner served as a kindergarten and first grade teacher at Calera Elementary School and as an Instructional Literacy Coach for our district.

Please take a moment to sign up for our ListServ emails at the link below. This is the primary way we communicate the most up to date information regarding our school. We have also posted some other means of communication we use, however, Listserv is the most accurate and up to date. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions. We are excited for you to join the HES family!

School Website: http://www.shelbyed.k12.al.us/schools/hes/index.htm

Facebook: Like our page at "Helena Elementary News"

Twitter: @HelenaElem **E-mail:** Listserv, sign up <u>HERE</u>

Administrative Team Contact:

Genét Holcomb, Principal gholcomb@shelbyed.org

April Maner, Assistant Principal amaner@shelbyed.org

TBD, Administrative Assistant

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Helena Elementary School

Parent/Student Guide 2023-2024

Vision Statement

To be the model for excellence in early childhood education

Mission Statement

To enable every child to be a lifelong learner and leader.

Beliefs

- Work Hard: We believe in an engaging environment with opportunities for learning and leading.
- Be Kind: We believe that building relationships and trust is vital for mutual respect and understanding.
- Dream Big: We believe it is the collective responsibility of all stakeholders to set and monitor individual goals for future success.

Motto

Helena Elementary School: Big Dreams, Bright Future

HES Faculty & Staff 2023-2024

2023-2024 HES Facult	y & Staff				
Kindergarten 12	Second Grade 15	Aides 13	Bus Drivers	Bus#	Bus Color
Burk, Andrea	Abernathy, Brandi	Abbott, Cassey	Berguish, Kelly	14-03	SpEd
Cummings, Jessica	Anderson, Amy	Avery, Maria	Carter, Dana	09-17	Orange
Davidson, Jacie	Ansley, Betty	Bartlett, Claire	Dyar, Amy	09-56	Lime
Haley, Katy	Brown, Amanda	Broadnax, Shari	Franklin, Julie	13-28	Pink
Henderson, Melanie	Clay, Pamela "Pam"	Gutierrez, Oadaliz	Hadaway, Jeff	23-29	SpEd
Hughey, Jan	Connell, Lauren "Mattie"	Johnson, Andra	Honeycutt, Kathy	23-10	Yellow
McCown, Kim	Daley, Shelly	Johnson, Angela	Jackson, Christy - Aide	23-29	
Moreland, Susannah	Henderson, Brandy	Knight, Shaun	Jeter, Sondra	09-07	Red
Nolen, Sabrina	Ling, Dana	Owen, Jennifer	Lambeth, Gail - Aide	12-01	
Poorian, Sarah	McMurry, Ashleigh	Rabon, Victoria	McAbee, Nicole - Aide	22-15	
Riley, Patrick	Moore, Tammie	Tilley, Megan	Childers, Christin	22-16	SpEd
Roper, Laken	Posey, Heather	Tkacik, Dessie	Pelletreau, Tom	09-55	Blue
	Ruble, Demi	Wehby, Tiffany	Peters, Selena	23-11	Husky
First Grade 13	Sellers, Jennifer	Wright, Jessica	Poche, Diane - Aide	22-16	
Allen, Stephanie	Woods, Wendy		Robertson, Renee	22-15	SpEd
Brown, Christin	Special Education -7	CNP	Rogers, Mary Chris	17-01	Gray
Esslinger, Ann	Festavan, Allison Kinder	Brannon, Cathy	Rose, Teirny	23-01	Purple
Frings, Heidi	Hayes, Emily - Speech	Contorno, Amanda	Scott, George	13-53	Green
Jordan, Leah	Hern, Adri - First	Edwards, Beth	Spigner, Frank	23-37	Brown
Meadows, Elizabeth	Johnson, Jennifer	Garner, Valorie	Troncale, Robert - Aide	14-03	
Nikolic, Lidija	Newhouse, Jennifer	NEW - CNP	Wood, Alisa	12-01	SpEd
Price, Sherry	Shuford, Shannon - Second	Register, Christina	Beck, Jeremy	17-04	Gold
Shackelford, Jennifer	Wilson, Casi		Lewsky, Mark	07-29	Turquoise
Stephens, Julie	Special Area/Instruction - 12	Admin/Office/Nurse - 8	Horn, Tiffany	09-79	White
Stephens, Misty	Anglin, Megan - Music	Browning, Blayne - SRO			
Toth, Olivia	Belew, Ashley - PE	Cipriano, Clare - Registrar			
Young, Casen	Bell, Maggie - ESL	Dassau, Flo - Bookkeeper			
	Brewer, Lillie - Interventionist	Holcomb, Genet - Principal			
Maintenance/Custodians	Carlton, Katie - GRC	Maner, April - AP			
Carlisle, Garry - Main. Tech	Clement, Allie - Interventionist	Moore, Christy - Nurse			
Mayo, Robert - Cust.	Handley, Meghan - Library	Ragusa, Jerri - Secretary			
Smith,Samantha - Cust.	Hitch, Jamie Ruth - Counselor 2nd (1/2)	TBD- AA			
Wooley, Daniel - Cust.	Keelin, Kathleen - Counselor				
	Rooker, Amy - Literacy Coach				
	Short, Adam - Art				
	Sullivan, Amy - PE				
	Rooker, Tamera - Library 1st 9 weeks				

PTO

The HES PTO is composed of parents, grandparents, and friends who support HES. Please contact Heather Leon, PTO President, at: hespto2021@gmail.com for more information on ways you can help. You may join PTO at any time. The cost of membership is \$15.00. The HES PTO meets monthly and all dates will be publicized in advance. We would love for you to join us in supporting HES!

School Day Schedule

The school day is 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Because school begins promptly at 8:00 a.m., it is essential that all students report to school no later than 7:40 a.m. if they plan to eat breakfast. Instruction starts at 8:00 a.m.

6:30 a.m.	Early Morning Care (offered for a fee)		
7:15 a.m.	Building opens		
	Breakfast begins		
	Students report to cafeteria or grade level areas		
7:40 a.m.	Students report directly to classrooms		
7:50 a.m.	Breakfast ends		
8:00 a.m.	Tardy bell rings - Students should be in classrooms		
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Classroom Instruction		
1:00 p.m.	Changes in dismissal for students must be		
	submitted in writing		
	(no phone calls or emails accepted)		
3:00 p.m.	Dismissal begins		
	(students will not be called for checkouts during		
	dismissal)		

Parent Guidelines

- Please pick up and drop off your child at the appropriate designated area.
- If your child is absent for two or more days, please notify the school prior to 9:00 a.m. to make arrangements for picking up make-up work. Remember to allow adequate time for the classroom teacher to gather the work. Make-up work will not be faxed but may be picked up between 3:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.
- If you have a problem or concern: first, discuss the issue with the teacher, and second, if necessary, schedule a conference with administration.
- Refer to all other parent responsibilities in our Shelby County Code of Conduct page 1.

Attendance - Every Day Counts... Every Minute Matters!

Children must be in school every day that they are physically able in order to achieve academic success. The following are the Shelby County School System Attendance Policy Regulations:

- Students who are absent must bring a written explanation of the absence from the
 parent or guardian within three days of returning to school, regardless of the
 absence reason. Please include your child's first and last name, date, and teacher
 name on the excuse. We prefer the excuses be emailed to
 SCBOE-HLES@Shelbyed.org.
- Absences for reasons other than illness may be considered excused at the principal's discretion. A "Parent Request for Planned Absence" form will be available in the Shelby County Code of Conduct and must be submitted before the absence. This form is also located in the HES office, on the HES website, and at the end of this handbook. HES administration will approve three absences per year as "principal permission" for reasons other than illness or one of the excused reasons in the Shelby County Code of Conduct.
- HES will comply with the Shelby County Attendance Policy Regulations by mailing letters to students having 3 or more unexcused absences. A pattern of tardies or absences may result in a referral to Early Warning Court. If you have any questions about the SCBOE Attendance Policy after reading the SCBOE Code of Conduct, please contact Brooke Dunham or Clare Cipriano.
- Please refer to the <u>Attendance At-A-Glance</u> document for helpful attendance tips.

Arrival Procedures

The school building does not open until 7:15 a.m. All students should be dropped off in the car rider line no earlier than 7:15 a.m. Walkers will be escorted to the gym stairs by an adult. You may not drop off in the front of the building. Our front parking lot is reserved for bus students and anyone needing to come to the office to conduct business. If you arrive and the gate is closed for car rider line, please walk your child up to the front office and sign them in with our secretary.

If you need to drop off earlier than 7:15 a.m., Early Morning Care offers childcare before the school opens beginning at 6:30 a.m. Students may be dropped off at any time during this time frame. The cost of EMC is \$3.00 per day per child. You can register for this program via our school website.

Dismissal of Children

Parents desiring to check out students during the school day for doctor/dentist or other valid reasons are to come to the office and sign their child out of school. Parents are asked not to check students out of school after 2:30 p.m. Contact the principal if you have questions regarding the above request. Should a parent send another person to pick up his/her child(ren), those persons **must** be listed on the child's enrollment card.

Any changes in dismissal procedures for children must be in writing and must be submitted before 1:00 p.m. **Telephone calls and emails will NOT be accepted**. Please send a handwritten note that includes the child's name and teacher's name into the office when there is a transportation change. Please be prepared to show photo identification when picking up a child from school.

Transportation

Bus Overview:

- Students may only ride the bus to which they are assigned.
- Emergency situations should be directed to the principal/assistant principal.
- Students should arrive 5-10 minutes before estimated pick-up time. Times may vary 5-10 minutes depending upon traffic and weather conditions.
- During the first two weeks of school, the bus is establishing the route. Please be patient if the bus is not on time.
- For each student's safety, we strongly encourage you to have someone waiting at the stop to receive your student from the bus. If your child is in Kindergarten and you approve of your student being dropped off unattended, you will need to indicate and sign accordingly on your student's transportation form. Otherwise, your student will be brought back to the school and will wait in the office to be picked up.
- Students should remain on the grass while waiting and approach the bus only after it has stopped.
- When the bus comes to a complete stop, the driver will motion students to walk across the street.
- Students should stay at least ten feet in front of the bus in order for the bus driver to keep them in his/her line of vision.
- HES bus drivers follow discipline procedures listed in the <u>Shelby County Code of Conduct</u> (see pgs. 9-15, 18). Please see the general bus behavior guidelines listed below.

Bus Behavior:

- Sit at all times.
- Speak in a low voice.
- Food and drinks are not allowed.
- Only items that fit in a backpack are allowed.
- Keep the bus clean.
- Follow the driver's directions and rules.
- Keep hands and head inside the bus at all times.
- Treat others and others' property as if it were yours.
- No glass items.

Car Rider Overview:

- We ask that all parents in the carpool line refrain from using cell phones once our dismissal procedures begin and your car has entered our parking lot. This is an obvious danger as attention is diverted from the many young children who are loading/unloading their cars. For the safety of our students, we ask the cooperation of all parents and drivers. Thank you for your patience and understanding.
- Students should enter and exit the car using the door closest to the school building.
- Parents, please remain in your cars. If you are having difficulty getting your child in/out of the car, please summon a teacher on duty for assistance.
- Students should be able to buckle/unbuckle themselves without adult assistance.

Morning Carpool:

- Drop off is in the marked "Drop Off Zone" behind the school building, along the sidewalk near the gym. Please have your child exit the door closest to the school building.
- Car riders should be dropped off at the school between 7:15 a.m. and 7:55 a.m. If you arrive after 7:55 a.m., you will need to park by the office and walk your child into the school to be checked in.
- Please drive slowly as you enter and exit the loading area in a single line.
- When unloading, please pull your vehicle up as far as possible so other vehicles may unload at the same time and put your car in park.
- Have your children's lunch, books, backpacks and other items ready before you enter the unloading area. Say your good-byes early and be ready to unload.
- Do not wait to unload until you are directly in front of the gym. You may unload anywhere in the "Drop Off Zone." This will keep the carpool line moving quickly and efficiently.

<u>Afternoon Carpool:</u>

- A school-issued car rider tag is **MANDATORY** for carpool pick-up. No pictures or handwritten notes will be accepted.
- Car line begins at the white gate behind the school building. Cars will form two lines leading from the street on the left side of the parking area near the school; the two lines continue through the bus parking lot across the street if necessary. There is a change for the 2023-2024 school year. This line WILL alternate. The line will continue to alternate and pull forward until the cars at the loading area stop. A staff member will enter car rider tags as cars move through the line. Drivers will pull forward to the loading area and place the car in park. Please make sure your Car Rider tag is hanging on your rearview mirror. Please make sure the car tag is visible at ALL times.
- Students will be seated according to the car rider number and a teacher will be on duty for each grade. Students will load in order and you may exit when your child has loaded. You may be asked to pull up if your child does not load in a timely manner.
- If you do not have a car rider tag visible, you will be asked to pull around to the front office. Our car line usually ends after 3:15pm, but we ask that you are here and available to pick your child up no later than 3:15 pm.
- It will take us a week or two to get into a routine with car riders. Please be patient with us and expect dismissal to take longer the first few weeks of school.

Walkers To/From School:

- Parents will escort their students down the staircase by the gymnasium. The teacher on duty will signal when the child can cross the road to come into the school building.
- Walkers will be dismissed to the gym at dismissal. Parents of walkers will need to come to the gym door and present their walker tag to pick their child up from the supervising adult. We ask that all walkers be picked up by 3:05 pm so that the supervising adult can be released to come help with the car rider line.
- In the event of rain, walker parents may pick up through the car rider line simply displaying their walker tag.

After School Care Program

ASCP operates from 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. each day. Please contact Cindy Warner at 682-7084 or the HES after school program after 2:30 p.m. at 682-5549 for more information. You must register for ASCP online at http://www.ezchildtrack.com/scscomed/parent or visit the Shelby County Schools Community Education program online at http://shelbyed.k12.al.us/communityed.htm

Breakfast and Lunch Program

HES has an outstanding breakfast and lunch program. Meals are of high quality and meet strict federal and state guidelines.

Parents/guardians can go online at www.myschoolapps.com to complete the meal benefit application for students.

Meal Prices 2022 2023 SY					
Breakfast					
	Paid Students	Reduced Students	All Visitors		
Elementary/Intermediate	\$1.75	\$0.30	\$3.50		
Middle/High	\$1.75	\$0.30	\$3.50		
Lunch					
	Paid Students	Reduced Students	All Visitors		
Elementary/Intermediate	\$2.50	\$0.40	\$4.50		
Middle/High	\$2.75	\$0.40	\$4.50		

Completion of the meal benefit application may qualify families for other benefits such as P-EBT. Additional information regarding meal benefits can be found on our Child Nutrition Program Webpage. Your child's teacher has a daily **snack time**. We prefer that you send healthy snacks such as fruit, crackers, cheese, or raw vegetables. The HES cafeteria does not have snacks for sale.

Students Withdrawing from School

Parents withdrawing students from HES should inform the school of the withdrawal and complete the online <u>Withdrawal - Transfer Form</u> form prior to withdrawal. This form contains important information that assists the new school in facilitating proper grade placement. Before withdrawing from school, students must return all textbooks and library books and pay any cafeteria balance.

Emergency School Closing

When inclement weather occurs <u>before</u> regular school opening, county administrators will decide if the school will open on time, close, or have a delayed start, and announce the decision on area radio/television stations as well as send a message via Listserv and Blackboard Connect. If inclement weather or other emergencies occur <u>during</u> the school day, county administrators will decide if schools will remain open for the remainder of the school day. If schools close early, area radio and television stations will air the decision. HES will send a message via Listserv and Blackboard Connect regarding school closing. Only those individuals listed on the enrollment cards will be allowed to pick up children. For this reason, it is very important to keep the emergency card updated with any changes in phone numbers, addresses, or designees. (The enrolling custodial parent must come to the school office to update this information.)

Ways in which you can help during an emergency:

- Please **do not** call the school. We must have the lines open for emergency calls.
- As soon as possible, come to the school to pick up your child and any other children for whom you are the emergency card designee.
- Leave the driveway in front of the school clear for emergency vehicles.
- If, at the direction of public officials (fire, police, etc) the students have been relocated to another site for safety, announcements will be made on local radio stations and TV stations.
- Please remind your child to follow the directions of school personnel.
- Sign-up for HES Listserv Message Service HERE.

Health Room Services/Medication Procedures

HES nurse coordinates the health program. Parents are encouraged to keep children at home if they are not feeling well. If they have a fever, they are to remain at home and must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications before returning to school. If a child becomes ill at school, a parent will be contacted to pick up his or her child. For this reason, it is extremely important that the school has the home and business telephone numbers of both parents and an emergency name and phone number in the event parents cannot be reached. Medications must be brought to school by a parent or responsible adult and signed into the health room with the appropriate school medication forms. Students are not allowed to self-carry medications without proper authorization by the physician with appropriate forms on file in the health room. Please refer to the Shelby County Code of Conduct for specific medication procedures.

Guidance

HES provides elementary guidance lessons for all students. Our counselors, Mrs. Kathleen Keelin (K and 1st) and Mrs. Jamie Ruth Hitch (2nd), work with parents, teachers, school administrators and other professionals to provide students with needed resources and services. Please contact Mrs. Keelin at (205) 682-5416 or Mrs. Hitch at (205) 682-5421 for more information.

Library/Media Services

Students are scheduled for checkout/library lessons weekly. All books are property of Helena Elementary School. They may be checked out for two weeks and renewed once. Kindergarten students may check out one book; first and second grade students may have up to two books at one time. If books are not brought back on your student's library day, they will not be able to check out a new one until the checked out books are returned. If a library book is lost/damaged, the student must pay full price as determined by the Media Specialist. Replacement copies will not be accepted.

Lost and Found

Please label your child's supplies, personal items, and clothing. The lost and found is located on a hanging rack directly inside the lobby. We will roll this rack out periodically and post when it is out to view on our listserv email service. Any unclaimed items will be donated to charity at the end of the allotted time announced on listserv.

Insurance

Insurance is available to cover children while at school and while traveling to and from school. 24-hour/year-round coverage is limited in its benefits, but does help defray medical expenses in case of an accident.

HES will provide insurance application forms but money for insurance is mailed directly to the insurance company by the parent. Please request forms in the school's main office. Brochures containing more information can be located in our Parenting Corner in the front office lobby.

Shelby County Dress Code

Students are required to be neat, clean, and fully clothed at all times at school. Students who have questionable or inappropriate dress will call their parents to bring appropriate clothing and will not be allowed to attend class until they change. Students must wear appropriate footwear for daily physical education. All students' shoes need to have backs on them. Please refer to the Shelby County Code of Conduct for a minimum guide to acceptable dress for students.

School Safety

The faculty and staff of HES believe that every child should feel safe and secure during the school day. Children will be supervised during every aspect of their day, including the classroom, lunchroom, early arrival, dismissal, and in the halls. During the school day, all exterior doors are locked with the exception of the main entrance. Entry to the school is through a controlled access door. All visitors must present a photo ID and be on a child's visitor list. The Helena Police Department works closely with Shelby County Schools to ensure that a SRO (School Resource Officer) is on campus during the school day.

Our physical education staff is committed to helping each child develop to their full potential based on developmental levels. Safety is stressed at all times and equipment is well maintained.

HES developed a Crisis Plan to assist in dealing with emergency situations. We have standard operating procedures to address inclement weather, fire, intruders, and bomb threats as well as other emergencies that may occur. If a student is injured, the nurse and staff members who have Red Cross and CPR certification are available to assist until emergency personnel arrive. In the interest of school safety, play weapons of any sort (guns, swords, knives, etc.) are not allowed. Verbal/written threats of any sort are not allowed and will be referred to the office.

Parent Communication

We partner with parents to meet the various needs of our students and value parent input. We will be meeting for conferences both virtually and in person this year. If you would like to schedule any conferences, please contact your child's teacher directly. In addition, classroom teachers will send home a weekly newsletter. Last, our school participates in a variety of social media outlets:

School Facebook: Like and follow "Helena Elementary News"

School Website: http://shelbyed.k12.al.us/schools/hes

School Twitter: @HelenaElem

Email ListServe: https://eforms.shelbyed.k12.al.us/#/subscribe-parent-list

Discipline

Helena Elementary follows a program called PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports). This includes school wide rules, expectations, rewards, and consequences, as well as a school wide communication log that will go home daily. Our expectations can be found in your student's binder/take home folder. It outlines specific areas of our school and the expectations that align with safety, kindness and responsibility. The goal is to develop a positive school culture, teach students appropriate behavior and give them support to sustain that behavior. This will result in increased academic performance and increased safety. When a student fails to follow school rules, the student may be referred to the office. Discipline procedures will include appropriate due process. Please refer to the Shelby County Code of Conduct for a minimum guide to appropriate discipline.

Nuisance Items

Any item that disrupts the school program is not allowed. Nuisance items will be confiscated and turned in to the office. HES is not responsible for nuisance items (lost, stolen, or confiscated). A parent or guardian must pick up the item from the school office. Nuisance items may include electronic devices, trading cards, toys, etc.

Celebrations

Classrooms will schedule Christmas, Valentine's Day, and End-of-the-Year celebrations. Student gifts (flowers, balloons, etc.) are not to be sent to the school. Our lunchroom will provide a special dessert for each birthday student monthly. This will take the place of outside birthday snacks. Invitations to parties may only be sent to school when the entire class or either all the girls or all the boys are being invited.

Check Policy

- All checks should be written on a commercially printed check with your name, address, and contact telephone number. No counter checks will be accepted.
- Separate checks should be sent for payment of different activities (i.e. field trips, fundraisers, meal accounts, etc.)
- A separate check should be sent for each student.
- Money should be brought to school in a sealed envelope with the student's first and last name and teacher's name on the outside.
- Please indicate the purpose of the money (meal account, field trips, etc.).
 Please include the child's name and purpose on check in the blank labeled "For".
- Helena Elementary School is not allowed to cash checks.
- The Shelby County School system recognizes that occasionally a parent may inadvertently overdraw a checking account and a check may be returned by your bank. In order to recover these funds in a private and professional manner, the Shelby County School System has contracted with Checkredi for collection of returned checks. Any check returned for insufficient funds will go directly to our collection agency. There will be a fee for collection in addition to the individual bank charges.

^{*}Any procedures not covered in this plan are included in the Shelby County Code of Conduct and Attendance
Handbook developed by the Shelby County Board of Education. The information in this handbook is not intended to
conflict with Shelby County Board of Education's policies and procedures. Those policies supersede the information
in this booklet.

<u>Parent Request Form for Excused Absence</u>

Date(s) of planned absence:			
Number of school days to be miss	sed:		
Name of student(s)	School	Grade	Absences to Date
If you have other children at other them below.	er Helena schools also	included in thi	s request, please list
Name of student(s)	School	Grade	Absences to Date
Briefly explain the purpose/reaso	on for this request:		
Note: This request should be subm does not automatically mean that the whether the request has been approximately.	ne absence will be excus		•
Parent Signature		Date	
1	For School Office Use (Only:	
Decision regarding this parent requal Approved Denied (but allowed to	uest: o make up assignments)		
Administrator Signature		Date	21