

# Weslaco Independent School District Student Handbook



2019-2020

Priscilla Canales, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability,  
please contact Sue Peterson at [speterso@wisd.us](mailto:speterso@wisd.us) or (956)969-6534

Weslaco ISD Student Handbook

2019-2020

Weslaco Independent School District Administration Building  
 319 West Fourth Street, Weslaco Texas 78596-0266  
 Tel: (956) 969-6500 Fax: (956) 969-2664  
 Dr. Priscilla Canales, Superintendent of Schools

**Elementary Schools: Prekindergarten thru Grade 5**

School	Principal	Address	Email	Telephone	Fax
Airport Drive Elementary	Ida Cuadra	410 N. Airport Drive Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:icuada@wisd.us">icuada@wisd.us</a>	969-6770	968-4062
Cleckler-Heald Elementary	Monica Vanderveer	1610 W. Sugarcane Dr. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:mvanderv@wisd.us">mvanderv@wisd.us</a>	969-6888	968-6808
Justice Raul A. Gonzalez Elementary	Rosa Garcia	3801 N. 5 ½ W. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:rosgarcia@wisd.us">rosgarcia@wisd.us</a>	969-6760	969-9828
Dr. R.E. Margo Elementary	Rubelina Martinez	1701 S. Bridge St. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:rumartinez@wisd.us">rumartinez@wisd.us</a>	969-6800	969-8868
Early Learning Foundation Academy	Jennifer Luna	400 S. Oklahoma Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:jluna@wisd.us">jluna@wisd.us</a>	969-6560	969-2664
Memorial Elementary	Rhonda Sellman	1700 S. Border Ave. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:rsellman@wisd.us">rsellman@wisd.us</a>	969-6780	968-5506
North Bridge Elementary	Dan Budimir	2001 N. Bridge St. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:dbudimir@wisd.us">dbudimir@wisd.us</a>	969-6810	968-1521
A.N. "Tony" Rico Elementary	Jacqueline Padilla	2202 N. International Blvd. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:japadilla@wisd.us">japadilla@wisd.us</a>	969-6815	565-4676
Sam Houston Elementary	Selma Gutierrez	608 N. Cantu St. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:sgutierrez@wisd.us">sgutierrez@wisd.us</a>	969-6740	973-9404
Rodolfo "Rudy" Silva Elementary	Sonia Gonzalez	1001 W. Mile 10 Rd. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:srgonzal@wisd.us">srgonzal@wisd.us</a>	969-6790	968-6937
PFC Mario Ybarra Elementary	Linda Hernandez	1800 E. Mile 10 N. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:mariaherna@wisd.us">mariaherna@wisd.us</a>	969-6587	969-6518

**Middle Schools: Grades 6-8**

Central Middle School	Pat Munoz	503 E. 6 <sup>th</sup> St. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:pmunoz@wisd.us">pmunoz@wisd.us</a>	969-6710	969-0779
Dr. Armando Cuellar Middle School	Desi Rodriguez	1201 S. Bridge St. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:darodrigue@wisd.us">darodrigue@wisd.us</a>	969-6720	973-9797
Beatriz G. Garza Middle School	Gilbert Reboloso	1111 W. Sugarcane Dr. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:greboloso@wisd.us">greboloso@wisd.us</a>	969-6774	447-0484
Mary Hoge Middle School	Pablo Vallejo	2302 N. International Blvd. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:pvallejo@wisd.us">pvallejo@wisd.us</a>	969-6730	514-0903

**Secondary Schools: Grade 9-12**

Weslaco East High School	David Gamboa	810 S. Pleasantview Dr. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:dgamboa@wisd.us">dgamboa@wisd.us</a>	969-6950	968-8693
Weslaco High School	Yvett Morales	1005 W. Pike Blvd. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:ymorales@wisd.us">ymorales@wisd.us</a>	969-6700	968-8008
C.T.E. Early College High School	Marco Zamora	700 S. Bridge St. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:mazamora@wisd.us">mazamora@wisd.us</a>	969-6742	969-6643
South Palm Gardens High School	Tina Wells	3907 Camino Real Viejo Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:treposh@wisd.us">treposh@wisd.us</a>	969-6621	565-5994

**Alternative School: Grade 9-12**

Horton D.A.E.P.	Roger Perez	104 Garza Ave. Weslaco, Tx 78596	<a href="mailto:roperez@wisd.us">roperez@wisd.us</a>	969-6916	969-6782
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# WISD *The Right Choice*

## 2019-2020 DISTRICT GOALS

### *Tradition of Excellence: Academics, Arts, & Athletics*



#### **1. STUDENT SUCCESS / LITERACY FOCUS:**

Provide high-quality, engaging, and innovative programs that develop college, career, military and service-ready leaders.



#### **2. ENGAGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:**

Ensure safe, secure, drug-free, technology-rich, and inviting environments which promote high performance.



#### **3. PARENT-COMMUNITY-BUSINESS-INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS:**

Foster exceptional community service, open communication, and positive collaboration for student success.



#### **4. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH / LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:**

Implement high-quality research-based professional development and continuous support for all employees.



#### **5. FINANCIAL STRENGTH:**

Facilitate strategic planning, management, accountability, and transparent financial stewardship to optimize federal, state, and local funding.

#### *Mission*

As The Right Choice, Weslaco ISD delivers a complete educational experience grounded in creativity, synergy, problem-solving, and critical thinking that develops lifelong learners, confident leaders, and engaged citizens.

#### *Vision*

Weslaco ISD inspires and empowers all students to reach their full, unique potential so that each thrives in and contributes to our global community.



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## Preface

### Parents and Students:

Welcome to the new school year!

Education is a team effort, and students, parents, teachers, and other staff members working together can make this a successful year.

The *Weslaco ISD* Student Handbook is a general reference guide that is divided into two sections:

**Section I: Parental Rights** will help you respond to school-related issues regarding curriculum and the school environment.

**Section II: Other Important Information for Parents and Students** is organized alphabetically by topic. Where applicable, it is divided by age and/or grade level.

**Note:** Unless otherwise noted, the term “parent” refers to the parent, legal guardian, any person granted some other type of lawful control of a student, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Student Handbook is designed to align with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct, a board-adopted document intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. The Student Handbook is **not** meant to be a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules in any given circumstance.

In case of conflicts between board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any Student Handbook provision, the district will follow board policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

Therefore, parents and students should become familiar with the *Weslaco ISD* Student Code of Conduct. To review the Code of Conduct, visit the district’s website at *www.wisd.us*. State law requires that the Code of Conduct be prominently displayed or made available for review at each campus.

A hard copy of either the Student Code of Conduct or Student Handbook can be requested at *the principal’s office at each campus or the central administration building, 319 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street*.

The Student Handbook is updated annually; however, policy adoption and revisions may occur throughout the year. The district encourages parents to stay informed of proposed policy changes by attending board meetings and reviewing newsletter and other communications explaining changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions. The district reserves the right to modify the Student Handbook at any time. Notice of revisions will be provided as is reasonably practical.

Although the Student Handbook may refer to rights established through law or district policy, it does not create additional rights for parents and students. It does not, nor is it intended to, represent a contract between any parent or student and the district.

For questions about the material in this handbook, please contact *your child’s principal*.

Complete and return to the student's campus the following forms (provided in the forms packet distributed at the beginning of the year or upon enrollment):

- Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook included on the Weslaco ISD registration form,
- Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information,
- Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (if you choose to restrict the release of information to these entities).

[See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 12 for more information.]

**Note:** References to board policy codes are included for ease of reference. The hard copy of the district's official policy manual is available for review at the district administration office, and an unofficial electronic copy is available at [www.wisd.us](http://www.wisd.us).

### **Accessibility**

If you have difficulty accessing this handbook because of a disability, please contact Sue Peterson, assistant superintendent, [speterso@wisd.us](mailto:speterso@wisd.us)

## **Section I: Parental Rights**

This section describes certain parental rights as specified in state or federal law.

### **Consent, Opt-Out, and Refusal Rights**

#### ***Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation or Provide a Mental Health Care Service***

Unless required under state or federal law, a district employee will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without obtaining written parental consent.

The district will not provide a mental health care service to a student except as permitted by law.

**Note:** An evaluation may be legally required under special education rules or by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for child abuse investigations and reports.

#### ***Consent to Display a Student's Original Works and Personal Information***

Teachers may display a student's work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement without seeking prior parental consent. These displays may include personally identifiable student information. Student work includes:

- Artwork,
- Special projects,
- Photographs,
- Original videos or voice recordings, and
- Other original works.

However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying a student's work on the district's website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the district (such as a campus or classroom website), or in district publications, which may include printed materials, videos, or other methods of mass communication.

#### ***Consent to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction if a Student is under Age 14***

A student under age 14 must have parental permission to participate in the district's parenting and paternity awareness program. This program was developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE) to be incorporated into health education classes.

#### ***Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law***

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission when it:

- Is to be used for school safety,
- Relates to classroom instruction or a co-curricular or extracurricular activity,
- Relates to media coverage of the school, or
- Relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.

In other circumstances, the district will seek written parental consent before making a video or voice recording of a student.

### ***Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment***

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling a student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and district policy FO(LOCAL).

However, in accordance with law, the district may not administer corporal punishment if a student’s parent submits a signed, written statement prohibiting its use.

A parent who does not want corporal punishment administered to his or her child must submit a written statement to the campus principal stating this decision. This signed statement must be submitted each school year. A parent may revoke this prohibition at any time during the school year by providing a signed statement to the campus principal.

#### **Note:**

- District personnel may use discipline methods other than corporal punishment if a parent requests that corporal punishment not be used.
- If the district knows that a student is in temporary or permanent custody of the state (through foster care, kinship care, or other arrangements), corporal punishment will not be administered, even when the student’s caregiver or caseworker has not submitted a signed statement prohibiting its use.

### ***Limiting Electronic Communications between Students and District Employees***

The district permits teachers and other approved employees to use electronic communications with students within the scope of professional responsibilities, as described by district guidelines detailed in the Employee Handbook.

For example, a teacher may create a social networking page for his or her class to relay information regarding class work, homework, and tests. A parent is welcome to such a page.

However, text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a district employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity must communicate with a student participating in that activity.

The employee is required to include his or her immediate supervisor and the student’s parent as recipients on all text messages.

*And*

The employee is required to send a copy of the text message to the employee's district email address.

A parent who does not want his or her child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee should contact the campus principal.

### ***Objecting to the Release of Directory Information***

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" from a student's education records without written consent.

"Directory information" is information that, if released, is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Examples include:

- A student's photograph (for publication in the school yearbook);
- A student's name and grade level (for communicating class and teacher assignments);
- The name, weight, and height of an athlete (for publication in a school athletic program);
- A list of student birthdays (for generating school-wide or classroom recognition);
- A student's name and photograph (posted on a district-approved and -managed social media platform); and
- The names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication (to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period).

Directory information will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, a parent or eligible student may object to the release of this information. Any objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of the student's first day of instruction for this school year. [See **Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information**, included in the forms packet.]

The district requests that families living in a shelter for survivors of family violence or trafficking notify district personnel that the student currently resides in such a shelter. Families may want to opt out of the release of directory information so that the district does not release any information that might reveal the location of such a shelter.

As allowed by state law, the district has identified two directory information lists—one for school-sponsored purposes and a second for all other requests. For district publications and announcements, the district has designated the following as directory information: student name; address; telephone listing; electronic email address; photograph; date and place of birth; major field of study; degrees, honors, and awards received; dates of attendance; grade level; most recent educational institution attended; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and weight and height of members of athletic teams. FL(LOCAL)]. If a parent does not object to the use of his or her child's information for these school-sponsored purposes, the

school will not ask permission each time the district wants to use the information for these purposes.

For all other purposes, the district has identified the following as directory information: Student name. If a parent does not object to the use of the student's information for these purposes, the school must release this information when requested by an outside entity or individual.

**Note:** Review **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records** on page 17.

***Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (Secondary Grade Levels Only)***

Unless a parent has advised the district not to release his or her student's information, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the district to comply with requests by military recruiters or institutions of higher education for the student's:

- Name,
- Address, and
- Telephone listing.

See a document in the forms packet for this purpose.

**Participation in Third-Party Surveys**

***Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey, Analysis, or Evaluation***

A student will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
- Sex behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship;
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent; or
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in or receive financial assistance under a program.

A parent can inspect the survey or other instrument and any corresponding instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For more information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

### ***"Opting Out" of Participation in Other Types of Surveys or Screenings and the Disclosure of Personal Information***

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) requires that a parent be notified when a survey is not funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

A parent has a right to deny permission for his or her child's participation in:

- Any survey concerning private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from the child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing that information.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student.

Exceptions are hearing, vision, or spinal screenings, or any physical examination or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA.]

A parent may inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to his or her child.

### **Removing a Student from Instruction or Excusing a Student from a Required Component of Instruction**

#### ***Human Sexuality Instruction***

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) makes recommendations for course materials.

State law requires that the district provide written notice before each school year of the board's decision to provide human sexuality instruction.

State law also requires that instruction related to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS):

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age;
- Devote more attention to abstinence from sexual activity than to any other behavior;
- Emphasize that abstinence, if used consistently and correctly, is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity;
- Direct adolescents to abstain from sexual activity before marriage as the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases; and
- If included in the content of the curriculum, teach contraception and condom use in terms of human use reality rates instead of theoretical laboratory rates.

Per state law, here is a summary of the district's curriculum regarding human sexuality instruction:

*See Weslaco ISD Board Policy EHAA.*

A parent is entitled to review the curriculum materials. In addition, a parent may remove his or her child from any part of the human sexuality instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties. A parent may also choose to become more involved with the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC. (See the campus principal for details.)

### ***Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence in Grades 3–12***

State law designates the week of September 17 as Celebrate Freedom Week and requires all social studies classes provide:

- Instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and
- A specific recitation from the Declaration of Independence for students in grades 3–12.

Per state law, a student may be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence if:

- A parent provides a written statement requesting that his or her child be excused,
- The district determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or
- A parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the U.S. government extends diplomatic immunity.

[See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

### ***Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags***

A parent may request that his or her child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be made in writing.

State law, however, requires that all students participate in one minute of silence following recitation of the pledges.

[See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 89 and policy EC(LEGAL).]

### ***Religious or Moral Beliefs***

A parent may remove his or her child temporarily from the classroom if a scheduled instructional activity conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs.

The removal may not be used to avoid a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, the student must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

### ***Tutoring or Test Preparation***

A teacher may determine that a student needs additional targeted assistance for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills based on:

- Informal observations,
- Evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests, or
- Results from diagnostic assessments.

The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible.

In accordance with state law and policy EC, without parental permission, districts are prohibited from removing a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the days the class is offered.

Under state law, students with grades below 70 for a reporting period are required to attend tutorial services—if the district offers these services.

[For questions about school-provided tutoring programs, see policies EC and EHBC, and contact the student’s teacher.]

### **Right of Access to Student Records, Curriculum Materials, and District Records / Policies**

#### ***Instructional Materials***

A parent has the right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered.

A parent is also entitled to request that the school allow the student to take home instructional materials the student uses. The school may ask the student to return the materials at the beginning of the next school day.

A school must provide printed versions of electronic instructional materials to a student if the student does not have reliable access to technology at home.

#### ***Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Noncustodial Parent***

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child’s misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO(LEGAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.]

#### ***Participation in Federally Required, State-Mandated, and District Assessments***

In accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a parent may request information regarding any federal, state, or district policy related to his or her child’s participation in required assessments.

## ***Student Records***

### **Accessing Student Records**

- A parent may review his or her child's records. These records include:
- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and school counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns,
- Records relating to assistance provided for learning difficulties, including information collected regarding any intervention strategies used with the child, as the term "intervention strategy" is defined by law,
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to the child, and
- Teaching materials and tests used in the child's classroom.

### **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and eligible students certain rights regarding student education records.

For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is anyone age 18 or older or who attends a postsecondary educational institution. These rights, as discussed here and at **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 12, are the right to:

- Inspect and review student records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access;
- Request an amendment to a student record the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of FERPA;
- Provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent; and

- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements. The office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20202

Both FERPA and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy.

Before disclosing personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance—including grades, test results, and disciplinary records—is considered confidential educational records.

Inspection and release of student records is restricted to an eligible student or a student's parent—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school receives a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records.

Federal law requires that control of the records goes to the student as soon as the student:

- Reaches the age of 18,
- Is emancipated by a court, or
- Enrolls in a postsecondary educational institution.

However, the parent may continue to have access to the records if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and, under limited circumstances, when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records without written consent of the parent or eligible student:

- When district officials have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include:
  - Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals;
  - Teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or medical staff);
  - A person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a specific institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer, or volunteer);
  - A person appointed to serve on a school committee to support the district's safe and supportive school program;

- A parent or student serving on a school committee; or
- A parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties.

“Legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official’s professional responsibility to the school and the student; or investigating or evaluating programs.

- To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General’s office, the U.S. Attorney General’s office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture’s office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or, in certain cases, other child welfare representatives.
- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- To another school, district/system, or postsecondary educational institution to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which the student already is enrolled.
- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or has received.
- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction.
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- When the district discloses directory information-designated details. [To prohibit this disclosure, see **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 12.]

Release of personally identifiable information to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The principal is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated until such time that the records are moved to the Weslaco ISD records storage at which point the Superintendent or designee is the custodian.

A parent or eligible student who wants to inspect the student’s records should submit a written request to the records custodian identifying the records he or she wants to inspect.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will be available to explain the record and to answer questions.

A parent or eligible student who submits a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy

of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the records.

The address of the superintendent's office is *319 West Fourth Street, Weslaco, Tx.*

The address of the principal's office is: *see directory at the front of this document.*

A parent or eligible student may inspect the student's records and request a correction or amendment if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.

A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the appropriate records custodian. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If after the hearing the records are not amended, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to place a statement in the student's record.

Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading guidelines. [See Finality of Grades at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 92, and **Complaints and Concerns** on page 45.]

The district's student records policy is found at policy FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) and is available at the principal's or superintendent's office [www.wisd.us](http://www.wisd.us).

Note: The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available.

### ***Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications***

A parent may request information regarding the professional qualifications of his or her child's teachers, including whether the teacher:

- Has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction,
- Has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived, and
- Is currently teaching in the field of discipline of his or her certification.

The parent also has the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to the child.

## **A Student with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances**

### ***Children of Military Families***

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children entitles children of military families to flexibility regarding certain district and state requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements;
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement;
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities;
- Enrollment in the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN); and
- Graduation requirements.
- The district will excuse absences related to a student visiting a parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who is:
  - Called to active duty,
  - On leave, or
  - Returning from a deployment of at least four months.

The district will permit **no more than five** excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

Additional information may be found at [Military Family Resources at the Texas Education Agency](#).

### ***Parental Role in Certain Classroom and School Assignments***

#### **Multiple-Birth Siblings**

State law permits a parent of multiple-birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets) assigned to the same grade and campus to request in writing that the children be placed in either the same classroom or separate classrooms.

Written requests must be submitted by the 14th day after the students' enrollment. [See policy FDB(LEGAL).]

#### **Safety Transfers / Assignments**

A parent may:

- Request the transfer of his or her child to another classroom or campus if the district has determined that the child has been a victim of bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832.
- Consult with district administrators if the district has determined that his or her child has engaged in bullying and the board has decided to transfer the child to another classroom or campus.

Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the principal for more information.

[See **Bullying** on page 34, and policies FDB and FFI.]

- Request the transfer of his or her child to a safe public school in the district if the child attends a school identified by the Texas Education Agency as persistently dangerous or if the child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds.

[See policy FDE.]

- Request the transfer of his or her child to another district campus if the child has been the victim of sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for the assault. In accordance with policy FDE, if the victim does not wish to transfer, the district will transfer the assailant.

### ***Student Use of a Service / Assistance Animal***

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student's disability must submit a written request to the principal before bringing the service/assistance animal on campus. The district will try to accommodate a request as soon as possible but will do so within ten district business days.

### ***A Student in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)***

A student in the conservatorship (custody) of the state who enrolls in the district after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year.

The district will grant partial course credit by semester when the student only passes one semester of a two-semester course.

A student in the conservatorship of the state who is moved outside the district's or school's attendance boundaries—or who is initially placed in the conservatorship of the state and moved outside the district's or school's boundaries—is entitled to remain at the school the student was attending prior to the placement or move until the student reaches the highest grade level at that particular school.

If a student in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets its graduation criteria.

For a student in the conservatorship of the state who is eligible for a tuition and fee exemption under state law and likely to be in care on the day preceding the student's 18th birthday, the district will:

- Assist the student with the completion of applications for admission or financial aid;
- Arrange and accompany the student on campus visits;

- Assist in researching and applying for private or institution-sponsored scholarships;
- Identify whether the student is a candidate for appointment to a military academy;
- Assist the student in registering and preparing for college entrance examinations, including (subject to the availability of funds) arranging for the payment of examination fees by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS); and
- Coordinate contact between the student and a liaison officer for students formerly in the conservatorship of the state.

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** on page 49, **Course Credit** on page 48, and **A Student in Foster Care** on page 100 for more information.]

### ***A Student Who Is Homeless***

Children who are homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain district provisions, including:

- Proof of residency requirements;
- Immunization requirements;
- Educational program placement (if the student is unable to provide previous academic records or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness);
- Credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year (if the student enrolled in the district after the beginning of the school year), per State Board of Education (SBOE) rules;
- Awarding partial credit when a student passes only one semester of a two-semester course;
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities; and
- Graduation requirements.

Federal law allows a student who is homeless to remain enrolled in the “school of origin” or to enroll in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing.

If a student who is homeless in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, state law allows the student to request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied by the district’s eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL). The district will expedite local timelines, when possible, for prompt dispute resolution.

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** on page 49, **Course Credit** on page 48, and **Students who are Homeless** on page 100 for more information.]

## ***A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services***

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individuals listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services.

This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine whether the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

### **Special Education Referrals**

If a parent makes a **written request** for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or to a district administrative employee of the school district, the district must respond no later than **15 school days** after receiving the request. At that time, the district must give the parent prior written notice of whether it agrees or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. If the district agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

**Note:** A request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally; it does not need to be made in writing. Districts must still comply with all federal prior-written notices and procedural safeguard requirements as well as the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of having a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district to respond within the 15 school-day timeline.

If the district decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an **exception** to the 45-school-day timeline. If the district receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30 due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the school district in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

### **Contact Person for Special Education Referrals**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is *Neil Garza* at (956)969-6822.

### **Section 504 Referrals**

Each school district must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's Section 504 program. Districts must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes:

- Notice,
- An opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records,
- An impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and
- A review procedure.

### **Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is *Neil Garza* at (956)969-6822.

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** on page 26.]

Visit these websites for information regarding students with disabilities and the family:

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
- [Partners Resource Network](#)
- [Special Education Information Center](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)

### **Notification to Parents of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to Students in General Education**

In accordance with state law, the district will annually notify parents if their child receives assistance for learning difficulties. Details of such assistance can include intervention strategies. This notice is not intended for those students already enrolled in a special education program.

### ***A Student Who Receives Special Education Services with Other School-Aged Children in the Home***

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, state law permits the parent or guardian to request that other students residing in the household be transferred to the same campus—if the grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus.

The student receiving special education services would be entitled to transportation; however, the district is not required to provide transportation to other children in the household.

The parent or guardian should contact the school principal regarding transportation needs prior to requesting a transfer for other children in the home. [See policy FDB(LOCAL).]

### ***A Student Who Speaks a Primary Language Other than English***

A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English.

If the student qualifies for these services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

### ***A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504***

A student with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law—and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services—may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be formed to determine whether the student needs services and supports under Section 504 in order to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as defined in federal law.

[See policy FB.]

[See **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 24 for more information.]

## **Section II: Other Important Information for Parents and Students**

Topics in this section of the Student Handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Where possible, the topics are also organized to alert you to the applicability of each topic based on a student's age or grade level. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact *your child's principal*.

### **Absences / Attendance**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws—one dealing with the required presence of school-aged children in school, e.g., compulsory attendance, the other with how a student's attendance affects the award of a student's final grade or course credit—are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

#### ***Compulsory Attendance***

##### **Prekindergarten and Kindergarten**

Students enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten are required to attend school and are subject to the compulsory attendance requirements as long as they remain enrolled.

##### **Between Ages 6 and 19**

State law requires that a student between the ages of 6 and 19 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of a diagnostic reading instrument.

A student will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur before or after school or during the summer, if the student does not meet the passing standards on the state assessment for his or her grade level and/or applicable subject area.

##### **Age 19 and Older**

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. If a student age 19 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The

student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See policy FEA.]

## ***Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance***

### **All Grade Levels**

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work. These include the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining U.S. citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, if the student comes to school or returns to school on the same day as the appointment. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus; and
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
  - An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
  - Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

As listed in Section I at **Children of Military Families**, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments. [See page 21.]

### **Secondary Grade Levels**

In addition, a junior or senior student's absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided this has been authorized by the board under policy FEA(LOCAL), the student receives approval from the campus principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed.

An absence will also be considered an exemption if a student 17 years of age or older is pursuing enlistment in a branch of the U.S. armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the absence does not exceed four days during the period the student is enrolled in high school and the student provides verification to the district of these activities.

Absences of up to two days in a school year will also be considered an exemption for a student serving as:

- An early voting clerk, provided the district's board has authorized this in policy FEA(LOCAL), the student notifies his or her teachers, and the student receives approval from the principal prior to the absences; and
- An election clerk, if the student makes up any work missed.

An absence of a student in grades 6–12 for the purpose of sounding “Taps” at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran will also be excused by the district.

### ***Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance***

#### **All Grade Levels**

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction, termed “accelerated instruction” by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

#### **Students with Disabilities**

If a student with a disability is experiencing attendance issues, the student’s ARD committee or Section 504 committee will be notified, and the committee will determine whether the attendance issues warrant an evaluation, a reevaluation, and/or modifications to the student’s individualized education program or Section 504 plan, as appropriate.

#### **Between Ages 6 and 19**

When a student between ages 6 and 19 incurs unexcused absences for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the school will send a notice to the student’s parent, as required by law, to remind the parent that it is the parent’s duty to monitor the student’s attendance and to require the student to come to school. The notice will also inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures and request a conference between school administrators and the parent. These measures will include a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service, or referrals to either in-school or out-of-school counseling or other social services. Any other measures considered appropriate by the district will also be initiated.

The truancy prevention facilitator for the district is Dr. Raul Cantu. If you have questions about your student and the effect of his or her absences from school, please contact the facilitator or any other campus administrator.

A court of law may also impose penalties against a student’s parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student is absent without excuse from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student ages 12–18 incurs unexcused absences on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

[See policies FEA(LEGAL) and FED(LEGAL).]

#### **Age 19 and Older**

After a student age 19 or older incurs a third unexcused absence, the district will send the student a letter as required by law explaining that the district may revoke the student’s

enrollment for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking a student's enrollment, the district may implement a behavior improvement plan.

### ***Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (Kindergarten–Grade 12)***

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student in kindergarten–grade 12 must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, who allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit or a final grade for the class.

If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed the plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences. [See policy FEC.]

All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered extenuating circumstances for purposes of attendance for credit or the award of a final grade.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will review absences incurred based on the student's participation in board-approved extracurricular activities. These absences will be considered by the attendance committee as extenuating circumstances in accordance with the absences allowed under FM(LOCAL) if the student made up the work missed in each class.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.

- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board by following policy FNG(LOCAL).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance to receive credit or a final grade will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

### ***Official Attendance-Taking Time (All Grade Levels)***

The district must submit attendance of its students to the TEA reflecting attendance at a specific time each day.

Official attendance is taken every day at 10:15a.m.

A student absent for any portion of the day, including at the official attendance-taking time, should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

### ***Documentation after an Absence (All Grade Levels)***

When a student is absent from school, the student—upon arrival or return to school—must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is age 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the district reserves the right to require a written note.

The campus will document in its attendance records for the student whether the absence is considered by the district to be excused or unexcused.

**Note:** Unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence.

### ***Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness (All Grade Levels)***

Within 2 days of returning to school, a student absent for more than 3 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school. Otherwise, the student's absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused.

[See policy FEC(LOCAL).]

### ***Driver License Attendance Verification (Secondary Grade Levels Only)***

For a student between the ages of 16 and 18 to obtain a driver license, written parental permission must be provided for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to access the student's attendance records and, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the student's attendance information to DPS. A verification of enrollment (VOE) and attendance form may be obtained from the office, which the student will need to submit to DPS upon application for a driver license.

### **Accountability under State and Federal Law (All Grade Levels)**

*Weslaco ISD* and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of the accountability requirements is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, which include:

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by TEA, the state agency that oversees public education, based on academic factors and ratings;
- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district compiled by TEA based on academic factors and ratings;
- The district's financial management report, which will include the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA; and
- Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by federal law.

This information can be found on the district's website at [www.wisd.us](http://www.wisd.us). Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

TEA also maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at [TEA Performance Reporting Division](#) and the [TEA homepage](#).

### **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test**

A student in grades 10–12 will be offered an opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test and consult with a military recruiter.

The test shall be offered on a date set by the high schools.

Please contact the principal at your child's high school for information about this opportunity and the specific date and time for this test.

### **Awards and Honors (Elementary and Middle Schools)**

#### **CUM LAUDE**

A student will earn CUM LAUDE designation at the end of the six weeks grading period if their overall average, for all core courses taken, is an 85 to 89.9. A student will earn CUM LAUDE

designation at the end of the school year if their overall average, for all core courses taken, is an 85-89.9. (Core: reading, writing, math, social studies, science)

#### **MAGNA CUM LAUDE**

A student will earn MAGNA CUM LAUDE designation at the end of the six weeks grading period if their overall average, for all core courses taken, is a 90-94.9. A student will earn MAGNA CUM LAUDE designation at the end of the school year if their overall average, for all core courses taken, is a 90-94.9. (Core: reading, writing, math, social studies, science)

#### **SUMMA CUM LAUDE**

A student will earn SUMMA CUM LAUDE designation at the end of the six weeks grading period if their overall average, for all core courses taken, is a 95-100. A student will earn SUMMA CUM LAUDE designation at the end of the school year if their overall average, for all core courses taken is a 95-100. (Core: reading, writing, math, social studies, science)

### **Awards and Honors (High Schools)**

#### **CUM LAUDE**

A student will earn CUM LAUDE designation at the end of each semester if their grade in each course is a 90-94.99.

#### **MAGNA CUM LAUDE**

A student will earn MAGNA CUM LAUDE designation at the end of each semester if their grade in each course is a 95-99.99.

#### **SUMMA CUM LAUDE**

A student will earn SUMMA CUM LAUDE designation at the end of each semester if their grade in each course is a 100

### **GRADUATING SENIORS (Class of 2020, 2021, and 2022)**

The District shall include in the calculation of class rank semester grades earned in all high school credit courses taken in grades 9-12, unless excluded and taken at any grade level but only in the following subject areas: English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. (See EIC (Local) for more information.)

Students who have a weighted GPA of 89.5 or higher after the calculation will be recognized as honor graduates.

### **GRADUATING SENIORS (Class of 2023 and after)**

The District shall include in the calculation of class rank semester grades earned in high school credit courses taken at any grade level, unless excluded, but only in the following subject areas: English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. (See EIC (Local) for more information.)

Students who are graduating on the Foundation High School Plan with Endorsement(s) will be recognized as honor graduates.

Students who have a weighted GPA of 90-94.9 (no rounding) after the calculation detailed in EIC (Local) will be recognized as **CUM LAUDE** graduates.

Students who have a weighted GPA of 95-99.9 (no rounding) after the calculation detailed in EIC (Local) will be recognized as **MAGNA CUM LAUDE** graduates.

Students who have a weighted GPA of 100 (no rounding) or higher after the calculation detailed in EIC (Local) will be recognized as **SUMMA CUM LAUDE** graduates.

## **Bullying (All Grade Levels)**

Bullying is defined in state law as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined by state law as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an internet website, or any other internet-based communication tool.

The district is required to adopt policies and procedures regarding:

- Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
- Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
- Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, or ostracism.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct. The district will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying. A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by using the online Student Reporting System on the district's website.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district. The parent of a student who has been determined by the district to be a victim of bullying may request that the student be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 21.]

A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's website, and is included at the end of this handbook in the form of an appendix. Procedures related to reporting allegations of bullying may also be found on the district's website.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL).

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 21, **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 50, **Hazing** on page 74, policy FFI, the district's Student Code of Conduct, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

## **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

The district offers career and technical education programs in the following areas:

Health Science Technology; Business Education; Family and Consumer Science; Agricultural Science and Technology; Technology Education; Marketing Education; Construction; Welding;

Architecture; Automotive; Cosmetology; Diesel Technology; Advanced Manufacturing Technology; and Television Production.

Admission to these programs is based on interest, age, aptitude and class availability.

It is the policy of the district not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

It is the policy of the district not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The district will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

[See **Nondiscrimination Statement** on page 87 for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator and ADA/Section 504 coordinator, who will address certain allegations of discrimination.]

### **Celebrations (All Grade Levels)**

Although a parent or grandparent is not prohibited from providing food for a school-designated function or for children in the child's or grandchild's classroom for his or her birthday, please be aware that children in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss this with the child's teacher prior to bringing any food in this circumstance. Occasionally, the school or a class may host certain functions or celebrations tied to the curriculum that will involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers for bringing food products.

[See **Food Allergies** on page 77.]

### **Child Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children (All Grade Levels)**

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at [www.wisd.us](http://www.wisd.us).

#### ***Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse (All Grade Levels)***

As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. A person who compels or

encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child.

Possible physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs of sexual abuse include:

- Difficulty sitting or walking;
- Pain in the genital areas;
- Claims of stomachaches and headaches;
- Verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children;
- Fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender;
- Sexually suggestive behavior;
- Withdrawal;
- Depression;
- Sleeping and eating disorders; and
- Problems in school.

Be aware that children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. [See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)** on page 50.]

### ***Warning Signs of Sex Trafficking (All Grade Levels)***

Sex trafficking of any sort is prohibited by the Penal Code. Sex trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, into sexual abuse, assault, indecency, prostitution, or pornography. Traffickers are often trusted members of a child's community, such as friends, romantic partners, family members, mentors, and coaches, although traffickers frequently make contact with victims online.

Possible warning signs of sexual trafficking in children include:

- Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude;
- Sudden appearance of expensive items (for example, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology);
- Tattoos or branding;
- Refillable gift cards;
- Frequent runaway episodes;
- Multiple phones or social media accounts;
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone;
- Unexplained injuries;

- Isolation from family, friends, and community; and
- Older boyfriends or girlfriends.

***Reporting and Responding to Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children  
(All Grade Levels)***

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused, sex trafficked, or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

A child who has experienced sexual abuse, trafficking, or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that disclosures of sexual abuse and sex trafficking may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse and neglect, and it is important to be calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

Parents, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse, sex trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. [To find out what services may be available in your county, see [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County](#).]

Reports of abuse, trafficking, or neglect may be made to:

The CPS division of the DFPS (1-800-252-5400 or on the web at [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](#)).

***Further Resources on Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children  
(All Grade Levels)***

The following websites might help you become more aware of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and other maltreatment of children:

- [Child Welfare Information Gateway Factsheet](#)
- [KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse](#)
- [Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, Resources](#)
- [Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team](#)
- [Human Trafficking of School-aged Children](#)

## Class Rank / Highest-Ranking Student (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

**Consistent Application for Graduating Class** The District shall apply the same class rank calculation method and rules for local graduation honors for all students in a graduating class, regardless of the school year in which a student first earned high school credit.

**Note:** The following provisions shall apply to students in the graduating classes of 2020, 2021, and 2022.

**Calculation** The District shall include in the calculation of class rank semester grades earned in all high school credit courses taken in grades 9–12, unless excluded below, and taken at any grade level but only in the following subject areas: English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The calculation shall include failing grades.

**Exclusions** The calculation of class rank shall exclude grades earned in a distance learning course, unless the course is either assigned to the student by the District or offered as a course option along with traditional District courses; self-paced courses; any course for which a pass/fail grade is assigned; or through credit by examination, with or without prior instruction.

**Weighted Grade System** The District shall categorize and weight eligible courses as Tier I, Tier II, Tier III, Tier IV, and Tier V in accordance with provisions of this policy and as designated in appropriate District publications.

Categories

*Tier I* Eligible Advanced Placement (AP) courses and dual credit courses that grant state-recognized credit for English, mathematics, science, or social studies shall be categorized and weighted as Tier I courses.

*Tier II* All other eligible dual credit courses shall be categorized and weighted as Tier II courses.

*Tier III* Eligible Pre-AP and honors courses shall be categorized and weighted as Tier III courses.

*Tier IV* Eligible advanced career and technical courses shall be categorized and weighted as Tier IV courses.

*Tier V* All other eligible courses shall be categorized and weighted as Tier V courses.

**Weighted Numerical Grade Average** The District shall assign weights to semester grades earned in eligible courses and calculate a weighted numerical grade average, in accordance with the following:

Category	Weight
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Category	Weight
Tier I	Multiplied by 1.25
Tier II	Multiplied by 1.15
Tier III	Multiplied by 1.10
Tier IV	Multiplied by 1.05
Tier V	Multiplied by 1.0

The District shall record weighted numerical grades on student transcripts.

**Transferred  
Grades**

When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible under the Tier V category and the District has accepted the credit, the District shall include the grades in the calculation of class rank.

When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible to receive additional weight under the District’s weighted grade system, the District shall assign additional weight to the grades based on the categories and grade weight system used by the District only if the same, a similar, or an equivalent course is offered to the same class of students in the District.

**Local Graduation  
Honors**

For the purpose of determining honors to be conferred during graduation activities, the District shall calculate class rank in accordance with this policy and administrative regulations by using grades available at the time of calculation at the end of the fall semester of the senior year.

For the purpose of applications to institutions of higher education, the District shall also calculate class rank as required by state law. The District’s eligibility criteria for local graduation honors shall apply only for local recognitions and shall not restrict class rank for the purpose of automatic admission under state law. [See EIC(LEGAL)]

**Valedictorian  
and Salutatorian**

The valedictorian and salutatorian shall be the eligible students with the highest and second highest rank, respectively. To be eligible for this local graduation honor, a student must have been continuously enrolled in the same District high school for the four semesters immediately preceding graduation.

*Breaking Ties*

In case of a tie in weighted numerical grade averages after calculation to the thousandths place, the District shall calculate a weighted numerical grade average using only eligible grades in Tier I and Tier II courses taken by each student involved in the tie to determine recognition as valedictorian or salutatorian.

**Note:** The following provisions shall apply to students beginning with the graduating class of 2023.

**Calculation**

The District shall include in the calculation of class rank semester grades earned in high school credit courses taken at any grade level, unless excluded below, but only in the following subject areas: English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The calculation shall include failing grades.

**Exclusions**

The calculation of class rank shall exclude grades earned in a distance learning course, unless the course is either assigned to the student by the District or offered as a course option along with traditional District courses; a dual credit course, unless the course is taken in the following subject areas: English, mathematics, science, or social studies; self-paced courses; any course for which a pass/fail grade is assigned; or through credit by examination, with or without prior instruction.

**Weighted Grade System**

The District shall categorize and weight eligible courses as Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III in accordance with provisions of this policy and as designated in appropriate District publications.

**Categories**

*Tier I*

Eligible AP and dual credit courses shall be categorized and weighted as Tier I courses.

*Tier II*

Eligible Pre-AP and honors courses shall be categorized and weighted as Tier II courses.

*Tier III*

All other eligible courses shall be categorized and weighted as Tier III courses.

**Weighted Numerical Grade Average**

The District shall assign weights to semester grades earned in eligible courses and calculate a weighted numerical grade average, in accordance with the following:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Tier I	Multiplied by 1.25
Tier II	Multiplied by 1.10
Tier III	Multiplied by 1.0

The District shall record weighted numerical grades on student transcripts.

**Transferred Grades**

When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible under the Tier III category and the District has accepted the credit, the District

shall include the grades in the calculation of class rank.

When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible to receive additional weight under the District's weighted grade system, the District shall assign additional weight to the grades based on the categories and grade weight system used by the District only if the same, a similar, or an equivalent course is offered to the same class of students in the District.

**Local Graduation Honors**

For the purpose of determining honors to be conferred during graduation activities, the District shall calculate class rank in accordance with this policy and administrative regulations by using grades available at the time of the calculation at the end of the fall semester of the senior year.

For the purpose of applications to institutions of higher education, the District shall also calculate class rank as required by state law. The District's eligibility criteria for local graduation honors shall apply only for local recognitions and shall not restrict class rank for the purpose of automatic admission under state law. [See EIC(LEGAL)]

**Valedictorian and Salutatorian**

The valedictorian and salutatorian shall be the eligible students with the highest and second-highest rank, respectively. To be eligible for this local graduation honor, a student must have been continuously enrolled in the same District high school for the four semesters immediately preceding graduation.

*Breaking Ties*

In case of a tie in weighted numerical grade averages after calculation to the thousandths place, the District shall calculate a weighted numerical grade average using only eligible grades in Tier I and Tier II courses taken by each student involved in the tie to determine recognition as valedictorian or salutatorian.

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**Note:** The following provisions shall apply to all students, regardless of their graduating class.

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**Highest-Ranking Graduate**

The student meeting the local eligibility criteria for recognition as the valedictorian shall also be considered the highest-ranking graduate for purposes of receiving the honor graduate certificate from the state of Texas.

**Class Schedules  
(Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a class/course schedule to fulfill each period of the day. Exceptions may be made occasionally by the campus principal for students in grades 9–12 who meet specific criteria and receive parental consent to enroll in less than a full-day's schedule.

[See **Schedule Changes** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.]

## **College and University Admissions and Financial Aid (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

For two school years following graduation, a district student who graduates as valedictorian in the top ten percent and, in some cases, the top 25 percent, of his or her class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the student:

- Completes the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program (a student must graduate with at least one endorsement and must have taken Algebra II as one of the four required math courses); or
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

In addition, the student must submit a completed application for admission in accordance with the deadline established by the college or university. The student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that he or she meets the admission requirements of the university or college to which the student submits an application.

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. For students who are eligible to enroll in the University during the summer or fall 2020 terms or spring 2021 term, the University will admit the valedictorian or the top six percent of the high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through a holistic review process.

Should a college or university adopt an admissions policy that automatically accepts the top 25 percent of a graduating class, the provisions above will also apply to a student ranked in the top 25 percent of his or her class.

Upon a student's registration for his or her first course that is required for high school graduation, the district will provide written notice concerning automatic college admission, the curriculum requirements for financial aid, and the benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid. Parents and students will be asked to sign an acknowledgment that they received this information.

Students and parents should contact the school counselor for further information about automatic admissions, the application process, and deadlines.

[See **Class Rank/Highest-Ranking Student** on page 39 for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class, and requirements for **Graduation** on page 67 for information associated with the foundation graduation program.]

[See **Students in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)** on page 22 for information on assistance in transitioning to higher education for students in foster care.]

## **College Credit Courses (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

Students in grades 9–12 have opportunities to earn college credit through the following methods:

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or college preparatory;
- Enrollment in an AP or dual credit course through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN);
- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with South Texas College, Texas State Technical College, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, which may be offered on or off campus;
- Enrollment in courses taught at other colleges or universities; and
- Certain CTE courses.

All these methods have eligibility requirements and must be approved prior to enrollment in the course. Please see the school counselor for more information. Depending on the student's grade level and the course, a state-mandated end-of-course assessment may be required for graduation.

It is important to keep in mind that not all colleges and universities accept credit earned in all dual credit or AP courses taken in high school for college credit. Students and parents should check with the prospective college or university to determine if a particular course will count toward the student's desired degree plan.

## **Communications—Automated**

### ***Emergency***

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. An emergency purpose may include early dismissal or delayed opening because of severe weather or another emergency, or if the campus must restrict access due to a security threat. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number previously provided to the district has changed.

[See **Safety** on page 92 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

### ***Non-emergency***

Your child's school will request that you provide contact information, such as your phone number and email address, for the school to communicate items specific to your child, your child's school, or the district. If you consent to receive such information through a landline or wireless phone, please ensure that you notify the school's administration office immediately upon a change in your phone number. The district or school may generate automated or pre-

recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or email communications that are closely related the school's mission, so prompt notification of any change in contact information will be crucial to maintain timely communication with you. Standard messaging rates of your phone carrier may apply. If you have specific requests or needs related to how the district contacts you, please contact your child's principal. [See **Safety** on page 92 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency.]

## **Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)**

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed informally by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the board has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual, available on the district's website at <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/644>.

A copy of the complaint forms may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's website at [www.wisd.us](http://www.wisd.us).

Should a parent or student feel a need to file a formal complaint, the parent or student should file a district complaint form within the timelines established in policy FNG(LOCAL). In general, the student or parent should submit the written complaint form to the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

## **Conduct (All Grade Levels)**

### ***Applicability of School Rules***

As required by law, the board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus as well as on district vehicles—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules. During any periods of instruction during the summer months, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

### ***Campus Behavior Coordinator***

By law, each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct. The name of each campus behavior coordinator is listed below:

- Airport Drive Elementary School – Amy Guajardo, 969-6770, ext. 39502

- A. N. Tony Rico Elementary School – Rosa Carrillo, 969-6815, ext. 36374
- Cleckler-Heald Elementary School – Mary Lou Reyna, 969-6888, ext. 39732
- Dr. R.E. Margo Elementary School – Veronica Flores, 969-6800, ext. 37799
- Justice Raul A. Gonzalez Elementary School – Zulema Garza, 969-6760, ext. 38265
- Memorial Elementary School – Celinda Guajardo, 969-6780, ext. 39823
- North Bridge Elementary School – Nidia De Los Santos, 969-6810, ext. 37325
- PFC Mario Ybarra Elementary School – Sonia Closner, 969-6587, ext. 37923
- Rodolfo “Rudy” Silva Jr. Elementary School – Carmen Briones, 969-6790, ext. 37425
- Sam Houston Elementary School – Lorena Moreno, 969-6740, ext. 37555
- Beatriz G. Garza Middle School – Sabrina Cuellar, 969-6774, ext. 34005
- Central Middle School – Rommel Rodriguez, 969-6710, ext. 34286
- Dr. Armando Cuellar Middle School – Olga Estrada, 969-6720, ext. 34506
- Mary Hoge Middle School – Gerardo Carranza, 969-6730, ext. 34605
- Weslaco High School – Dr. John Perfetto, 969-6700
- Weslaco East High School – Danny Reyna, 969-6955
- CTE Early College High School – Marco Zamora, 969-6589
- South Palm Gardens High School – Tina Wells, 969-6654
- Horton D.A.E.P. – Roger Perez, 969-6916

### ***Deliveries***

Except in emergencies, delivery of messages or packages to students will not be allowed during instructional time. A parent may leave a message or a package, such as a forgotten lunch, for the student to pick up from the front office during a passing period or lunch.

### ***Disruptions of School Operations***

Disruptions of school operations are not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by state law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district.

### ***Social Events***

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

Please contact the campus principal if you are interested in serving as a chaperone for any school social events.

### **Counseling**

#### ***Academic Counseling***

##### **Elementary and Middle / Junior High School Grade Levels**

The school counselor is available to students and parents to talk about the importance of postsecondary education and how best to plan for postsecondary education, including appropriate courses to consider and financial aid availability and requirements.

In either grade 7 or 8, each student will receive instruction related to how the student can best prepare for high school, college, and a career.

##### **High School Grade Levels**

High school students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each year, high school students will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities, as well as information on the importance of postsecondary education.

The school counselor can also provide information about entrance examinations and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission, financial aid, housing, and scholarships as these relate to state colleges and universities. Additionally, the school counselor can provide information about workforce opportunities after graduation or technical

and trade school opportunities, including opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates and licenses.

### ***Personal Counseling (All Grade Levels)***

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, emotional or mental health issues, or substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should report to the counselor's office or speak to their principal. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

If your child has experienced trauma, contact the school counselor for more information.

[See **Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention** on page 100, **Suicide Awareness and Mental Health Support** on page 101, and **Child Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children and Dating Violence** on page 36.]

### **Course Credit (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

A student in grades 9–12, or in a lower grade when a student is enrolled in a high school credit-bearing course, will earn credit for a course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-semester (1 credit) course, the student's grades from both semesters will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. Should the student's combined average be less than 70, the student will be required to retake the semester in which he or she failed.

### **Credit by Examination *If a Student Has Taken the Course / Subject* (Grades 6-12)**

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit or a final grade for it—may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit or a final grade by passing an examination approved by the district's board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to take an examination to earn credit for a course or to be awarded a final grade in a subject after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

If the student is granted approval to take an examination for this purpose, the student must score at least 70 on the examination to receive credit for the course or subject.

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an examination.

[For further information, see the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL).]

### **Credit by Examination for Advancement / Acceleration *If a Student Has Not Taken the Course / Subject***

A student will be permitted to take an examination to earn credit for an academic course or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction, i.e., for advancement or to accelerate to the next grade level. The examinations offered by the district are approved by the district's board of trustees. The dates on which examinations are scheduled during the 2019–20 school year will be published in appropriate district publications and on the district's website. The only exceptions to the published dates will be for any examinations administered by another entity besides the district or if a request is made outside of these time frames by a student who is homeless or by a student involved in the foster care system. When another entity administers an examination, a student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity. During each testing window provided by the district, a student may attempt a specific examination only once.

If a student plans to take an examination, the student (or parent) must register with the school counselor no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. [For further information, see policy EHDC.]

### **Kindergarten Acceleration**

In accordance with State Board rules, the Board shall approve procedures developed by the Superintendent or designee to allow a child who is five years old at the beginning of the school year to be assigned initially to grade 1 rather than kindergarten. Criteria for acceleration may include:

1. Scores on readiness tests or achievement tests that may be administered by appropriate District personnel.
2. Recommendation of the kindergarten or preschool the student has attended.
3. Chronological age and observed social and emotional development of the student.
4. Other criteria deemed appropriate by the principal and Superintendent.

### ***Students in Grades 1–5***

A student in elementary school will be eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if the student scores at least 80 on each examination in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, a district administrator recommends that the student be accelerated, and the student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement.

### ***Students in Grades 6–12***

A student in grade 6 or above will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 80 on the examination, a scaled score of 50 or higher on an examination administered through the CLEP, or a score of 3 or higher on an AP examination, as applicable. A student may take an examination to earn high school course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which

the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's high school course sequence, the student must complete the course.

## **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)**

The district believes that all students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect, to avoid behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or on the district's website. [See policy FFH.]

### ***Dating Violence***

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults; name-calling; put-downs; threats to hurt the student, the student's family members, or members of the student's household; destroying property belonging to the student; threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship; threats to harm a student's current dating partner; attempts to isolate the student from friends and family; stalking; or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

### ***Discrimination***

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law that negatively affects the student.

### ***Harassment***

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an

intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

In addition to dating violence as described above, two other types of prohibited harassment are described below.

### ***Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment***

Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student are prohibited.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature, such as comforting a child with a hug or taking the child's hand. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Gender-based harassment includes harassment based on a student's gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender.

Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

### ***Retaliation***

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

## ***Reporting Procedures***

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. [See policy FFH(LOCAL) and (EXHIBIT) for other appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.]

Upon receiving a report of prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by that policy. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law and that policy. If the alleged prohibited conduct, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and would also be considered bullying as defined by law and policy FFI, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted.

The district will promptly notify the parent of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district. In the event alleged prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parent of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy FFH.

## ***Investigation of Report***

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated.

If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies the district that it is investigating the matter and requests that the district delay its investigation, the district will resume the investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During the course of an investigation and when appropriate, the district will take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action, and, in some cases, corrective action, will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the district investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

## **Discrimination**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 50.]

## **Distance Learning**

### ***All Grade Levels***

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state-required essential knowledge and skills but are taught through multiple technologies and alternative methodologies such as mail, satellite, internet, video-conferencing, and instructional television.

The distance learning opportunities that the district makes available to district students are TxVSN.

If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN), as described below, to earn credit in a course or subject, the student must receive permission from the principal prior to enrolling in the course or subject. If the student does not receive prior approval, the district may not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

### ***Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) (Secondary Grade Levels)***

The Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) has been established by the state as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TXVSN to earn course credit for graduation.

Depending on the TXVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the “no pass, no play” rules. [See **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations** on page 59.] In addition, for a student who enrolls in a TXVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required, the student must still take the corresponding EOC assessment.

If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child be enrolled in a TXVSN course, please contact the school counselor. Unless an exception is made by the school principal, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TXVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course.

A copy of policy EHDE will be distributed to parents of middle and high school students at least once each year. If you do not receive a copy or have questions about this policy, please contact the school principal.

## **Distribution of Literature, Published Materials, or Other Documents (All Grade Levels)**

### ***School Materials***

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc.

The school newspaper and the yearbook are available to students.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

## ***Non-school Materials***

### **From Students**

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before selling, posting, circulating, or distributing more than *10 copies* of written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any nonschool material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made within two school days.

The Superintendent or designee has designated principal's office at elementary schools and the counseling office at secondary schools as the locations for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA.]

A student may appeal a decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who sells, posts, circulates, or distributes nonschool material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without approval will be removed.

[See FNG(LOCAL) for student complaint procedures.]

### **From Others**

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policy GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the Superintendent or designee prior to review. *The Superintendent or designee* will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA or GF.]

The campus principal has designated the main office as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a non-curriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All non-school materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

## **Dress and Grooming (All Grade Levels)**

The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards.

The District's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, instill discipline, prevent disruption, avoid safety hazards and teach respect for authority. Students shall be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean and neat and that will not be a health or safety hazard to themselves or others. The District prohibits any clothing or grooming that in the principal's judgment may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of, or interference with normal school operation. The faculty and administration shall enforce the policy governing campus dress and grooming uniformly and fairly. **It shall be the responsibility of the professional staff to determine the appropriateness of student dress at all school functions.**

- A. All students are required to wear a school uniform at all WISD elementary and middle schools. Each campus will provide the uniform specifications for the school.**
- B. All students:**
  - 1. Clothes should be neat, clean and properly fitting. No oversized shirts, shorts, or pants are permitted.
  - 2. All shirts, blouses, and tops must have sleeves. Tank tops, muscle shirts, and crop tops are not permitted.
  - 3. Shirts, blouses, and jerseys must be long enough so that they cover the top of the skirt, slacks or shorts.
  - 4. See-through materials may not be worn.
  - 5. Walking shorts, no shorter than two inches above the knee will be allowed. Biker, gym and wind shorts are not allowed.
  - 6. Leggings and tights must be covered by a shirt, skirt or dress that is no more than two inches above the knee.
  - 7. Patches or writing with obscene, vulgar, drug related or similarly suggestive connotations will not be permitted.
  - 8. All students are prohibited from wearing or possessing bandannas at school related or school sponsored activities pants are permitted.
  - 9. Steel-toed boots may not be worn.
  - 10. Dyed hair that administrators consider distracting will not be allowed.
  - 11. Only prescription contacts will be allowed and must not be distracting or disruptive.
  - 12. Sunglasses will only be allowed with a doctor's note.
  - 13. No heavy metal accessories like wallet chains, or metal attire may be worn.
  - 14. Trench coats may not be worn.
  - 15. Earrings may be worn at the high schools. Girls may wear earrings at the middle and elementary schools. Boys may not wear earrings at the middle and elementary schools. No other type of body rings or piercing will be allowed.

**C. Females:**

1. Girls must wear bras and proper foundation garments.
2. Low cut dresses and shirts, bare midriffs or halter type tops or shirts that show bare shoulders may not be worn, even if worn under another shirt or jacket.
3. Girls may wear dresses or skirts that are no more than two inches above the knee.

**D. Males:**

1. Boys may wear mustaches so long as they are neat and well trimmed and do not extend below the corners of the mouth. Beards will not be permitted. Goatees will not be permitted.
2. Other than the permitted mustache, boys are expected to be clean shaven at all times. Sideburns should not extend below the bottom of the ear lobe. They may not be flared.
3. Boy's hair should be cut often enough to ensure neatness and cleanliness. At the elementary schools mo-hawks, shaved designs, ponytails and man buns are not allowed.
4. Shirts must be buttoned at all times except for the top two buttons.

If the principal determines that a student's grooming violates the dress code, the student shall be given the opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student shall be assigned in-school suspension for the remainder of the day or until the problem is corrected. Repeated dress code offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action. Appropriate discipline procedures shall be followed in all cases in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Electronic Devices and Technology Resources (All Grade Levels)**

### ***Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones***

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers. The use of mobile telephones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event. If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. The parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15. Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parent will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE.] In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 96 and policy FNF.] Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices.

### ***Possession and Use of Other Personal Electronic Devices***

Except as described below, students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices such as MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, e-readers, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 96 and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

### ***Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices***

In some cases, students may find it beneficial or might be encouraged to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must obtain prior approval before using personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional use. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook). When students are not using the devices for approved instructional purposes, all devices must be turned off during the instructional day. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

### ***Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources***

District-owned technology resources for instructional purposes may be issued to individual students. Use of these technological resources, which include the district's network systems and use of district equipment, is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

### ***Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources***

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting,"

will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, as well as possibly impede future endeavors of a student, we encourage you to review with your child ["Before You Text" Sexting Prevention Course](#), a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of engaging in inappropriate behavior using technology.

In addition, any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of the district's computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and, in some cases, the consequence may rise to the level of expulsion.

### **End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments**

[See **Graduation** on page 67 and **Standardized Testing** on page 98.]

### **English Learners (All Grade Levels)**

A student who is an English learner is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for an English learner. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible.

To determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services, and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will then designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs that the student will require to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student's continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR Spanish, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing** on page 98, may be administered to an English learner for a student up to grade 5. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to English learners who qualify for services.

If a student is considered an English learner and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student's ARD committee will make instructional and assessment decisions in conjunction with the LPAC.

## **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations (All Grade Levels)**

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Participation in some of these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. When the district arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions to this may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor. [See **Transportation** on page 102.]

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. Students involved in UIL athletic activities and their parents can access the UIL Parent Information Manual at [UIL Parent Information Manual](#); a hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request. To report a complaint of alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of TEA at (512) 463-9581 or [curriculum@tea.texas.gov](mailto:curriculum@tea.texas.gov).

[See [UIL Texas](#) for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.]

The equipment used in football is no exception. As a parent, you are entitled to review the district's records regarding the age of each football helmet used by the campus, including when a helmet has been reconditioned.

Generally, a student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

However, if a student receives a grade below 70, but earns at least a 60, at the end of a grading period in an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course; or Pre-AP honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or languages other than English, the student remains eligible for participation in all extracurricular activities.

In addition, the following provisions apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives special education services and who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to 10 absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of 5 absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a

maximum of 2 absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.

- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

### ***Standards of Behavior***

Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by board policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

### ***Offices and Elections***

Certain clubs, organizations, and performing groups will hold elections for student officers. Please see your child's principal for more information about the clubs and organizations at each school.

### **Fees**

#### **(All Grade Levels)**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student health and accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.

- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
  - A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. [See **Buses and Other School Vehicles** on page 102.]
  - A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit or has not been awarded a final grade because of absences and whose parent chooses the program for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.
  - In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN).

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the campus principal. [For further information, see policy FP.]

### **Fundraising (All Grade Levels)**

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes in accordance with administrative regulations. [For further information, see policies FJ and GE.]

### **Gang-Free Zones (All Grade Levels)**

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

### **Gender-Based Harassment**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 50.]

### **Grade-Level Classification (Grades 9–12 Only)**

After the ninth grade, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation.

<b>Credits Earned</b>	<b>Classification</b>
7	Grade 10 (Sophomore)

Credits Earned	Classification
14	Grade 11 (Junior)
21	Grade 12 (Senior)

## **Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels)**

Grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated and distributed to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines have been reviewed by each applicable curriculum department and have been approved by the campus principal. These guidelines establish the minimum number of assignments, projects, and examinations required for each grading period. In addition, these guidelines establish how the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (i.e., letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, etc.). Grading guidelines also outline in what circumstances a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination for which the student originally made a failing grade. Procedures for a student to follow after an absence will also be addressed.

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 92 for additional information on grading guidelines.]

### **Weslaco ISD Guidelines for Grading**

#### **Purpose for Grading Guidelines**

Implementing consistent district grading policies and guidelines are important components in the effectiveness and credibility of our educational system. Student grades serve as a tool to: (1) promote meaningful evaluation of student achievement, (2) inform students and parents of academic progress, and (3) help improve student performance, habits, and practices. The process to determine those grades should reflect a standard of reliability and validity. Grading should be fair, consistent, and measure the curriculum that has been taught.

#### **Reference to Board Policy – EIA Local**

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that each campus or instructional level develops guidelines for teachers to follow in determining grades for students. These guidelines shall ensure that grading reflects a student's relative mastery of an assignment and that a sufficient number of grades are taken to support the grade average assigned. Guidelines for grading shall be clearly communicated to students and parents.

#### **Dual Enrollment**

Dual enrollment courses will follow the grading guidelines of the post-secondary institution that will grant the credit for the course. The grading guidelines for each dual enrollment course will be provided to the student in the course syllabus. Each student enrolled in a dual enrollment course will receive a copy of the syllabus for the course on their first day of enrollment in the course. A copy of the course syllabus for all dual enrollment courses will be retained by the campus principal. Parents may request a copy of the syllabus from the campus principal.

**District Guidelines for Grading in ALL Courses except Dual Enrollment:**

**#1 – Minimum Number of Assessments per Grading Period – for all subjects and grade levels**

- MAJOR Assessments (per subject) = minimum of 2, maximum of 4
- MINOR Assessments (per subject) = 6-8, depending on number of major assessments
- Total Number of MAJOR and MINOR Assessments = minimum of 10
- Number of MAJOR & MINOR Assessments for Progress Reports (at least 1 being a MAJOR Assessment) = 4

**#2 – “Reasonable opportunity” redo or make-up a MINOR assessment:**

- Students enrolled in Pre-AP at the sophomore level and above, and all AP courses, will NOT have the opportunity to redo a MINOR assignment.
- In the case of academic dishonesty, the student will not have the opportunity to redo or make-up a MINOR assessment. (See Weslaco ISD Board Policy EIA)

Student may initiate the opportunity to redo a MINOR assessment. (Does not apply to homework grades.)

- The new grade will be no higher than a 70.
  - The student must participate in some form of re-teaching/tutoring prior to redoing the assignment.
  - Students will have 3 class days to participate in re-teaching/tutoring and submit a redone MINOR assessment.
  - A teacher will have the option to assign an alternative assessment in lieu of the original assessment.

Student may initiate the opportunity to make-up a MINOR assessment:

- Students will be given 3 class days to make-up a MINOR assessment if student is in attendance on the date the assignment is due. There will be a progressive grade penalty of 15 points per day for each late day.
- If a student is absent, they will be given the total number of absent days (up to 3) to make up a MINOR assessment (without penalty).
- A teacher will have the option to assign an alternative assessment in lieu of the original assessment.

- In extenuating circumstances, such as a prolonged illness, the campus principal will be involved in the decision on the length of time the students has to make-up missing assignments.

**#3 – “Reasonable opportunity” to redo or make-up a MAJOR assessment (excludes district benchmarks and CBAs).**

- Students enrolled in Pre-AP at the sophomore level and above, and all AP courses, will NOT have the opportunity to redo a MAJOR assessment.
- In the case of academic dishonesty, the student will not have the opportunity to redo or make-up a MAJOR assessment. (See Weslaco ISD Board Policy EIA)

Student may initiate the opportunity to redo or make-up a MAJOR assessment IF the assessment is turned in, or completed in class on the due date.

- Students will be given up to 3 class days to redo a MAJOR assessment, but the grade will be no higher than a 70.
- The student must participate in some form of re-teaching/tutoring prior to redoing the assignment. (This will take place within the 3 class days allowed to redo a MAJOR assessment.)
- A teacher will have the option for assigning an alternative assessment in lieu of the original MAJOR assessment.
- In extenuating circumstances, such as prolonged illness, the campus principal will be involved in the decision on the length of time the students has to make-up assessments.

Students may initiate the opportunity to make-up a MAJOR assessment that falls in the category of an exam, test or lab that was completed in class, if the student is absent from school on the date that the exam, test or lab takes place.

- Students will be given up to 3 class days to redo the exam, test or lab.
- A teacher will have the option for assigning an alternative assessment in lieu of the original MAJOR assessment.

Students may initiate the opportunity to make-up a MAJOR assessment that falls in the category of a project, essay or portfolio, if they are absent on the day the assignment was due and advanced notice of the due date was given to students.

- There will be a progressive grade penalty of 15 points per day for each late day.
- A teacher will have the option for assigning an alternative assessment in lieu of the original MAJOR assessment.

In extenuating circumstances, such as a prolonged illness, the campus principal will be involved in the decision to redo or make-up MAJOR assessments in all courses.

**#4 – Secondary Only – All teachers will provide parents and students with a syllabi for ALL courses.**

Components of Syllabi

- One of two pages in Word document (may be longer for AP and Dual classes)
- Teacher Name/Class Times
- Course Outline/Scope and Sequence
- Books/Materials/Major projects/Suggested readings
- Grading Guidelines/Classroom Expectations
- Available tutoring time/conference times
- Teacher e-mail
- Due to Appraiser – early August (exact date set by campus) copy kept in binder in principal’s office

**#5 – Types of Assessments and Weighting (see #7 for Elementary Reading and Writing)**

	Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
Major Assessment	Exam Test Project Essay Portfolio Benchmark CBA	20%	Exam Test Project Essay Portfolio Lab Benchmark CBA	30%	Exam Test Project Essay Portfolio Lab Benchmark CBA	40%
Minor Assessment	Quiz Presentation Journal Lab Classwork	80%	Quiz Presentation Journal Lab Classwork Homework Participation	70%	Quiz Presentation Journal Lab Classwork Homework	60%

**#6 Types of Assessments and Weighting for Elementary Reading and Writing**

**READING**

**First and Second Grades**

Guided Reading	35%
Shared Reading	40%
Independent Reading	15%
Major Assessment	10%

**Third through Fifth Grades**

Guided Reading	30%
Shared Reading	50%
Independent Reading	10%
Major Assessment	10%

**WRITING**

**First and Second Grades**

Composition	30%
Grammar / Mechanics	60%
Major Assessment	10%

**Third through Fifth Grades**

Composition	40%
Grammar / Mechanics	40%
Major Assessment	20%

**Graduation  
(Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

***Requirements for a Diploma***

A student must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma from the district:

- Complete the required number of credits established by the state and any additional credits required by the district;
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state;
- Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by state law; and
- Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by the district, in the specific communication skills required by the State Board of Education(SBOE).

## ***Testing Requirements for Graduation***

Students are required, with limited exceptions and regardless of graduation program, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments. State law and state rules also provide for certain scores on norm-referenced national standardized assessments or on the state-developed assessment used for entrance into Texas public universities to substitute for the requirement to meet satisfactory performance on an applicable EOC assessment, should a student choose this option. [See the school counselor for more information on the state testing requirements for graduation.]

If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, the district will provide remediation to the student in the content area for which the performance standard was not met. This may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours or at times of the year outside normal school operations.

In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on two or fewer of the required assessments may still be eligible to graduate if an individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, unanimously determines that the student is eligible to graduate.

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 98 for more information.]

## **Foundation Graduation Program**

Every student in a Texas public school who entered grade 9 in the 2014–15 school year and thereafter will graduate under the “foundation graduation program.” Within the foundation graduation program are “endorsements,” which are paths of interest that include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Business and Industry; Public Services; Arts and Humanities; and Multidisciplinary Studies. Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student’s transcript. The foundation graduation program also involves the term “distinguished level of achievement,” which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits. A **Personal Graduation Plan** will be completed for each high school student, as described on page 71.

State law and rules prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student’s sophomore year, the student and student’s parent are advised of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement and submit written permission to the school counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement. A student who anticipates graduating under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement and who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether this will satisfy the admission requirements of the student’s desired college or university.

Graduating under the foundation graduation program will also provide opportunities to earn “performance acknowledgments” that will be acknowledged on a student’s transcript. Performance acknowledgments are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and

biliteracy, in a dual credit course, on an AP or IB examination, on certain national college preparatory and readiness or college entrance examinations, or for earning a state recognized or nationally or internationally recognized license or certificate. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgments are prescribed by state rules, and the school counselor can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

A student is not required to complete an Algebra II course to graduate under the foundation graduation program, and the district will annually notify a student's parent of this fact. However, the student and parent should be aware that not taking Algebra II will make a student ineligible for automatic admission to four-year public universities and colleges in Texas and for certain financial aid and grants while attending those institutions.

## Credits Required, Class of 2020, 2021, 2022

The foundation graduation program requires completion of the following credits:

<b>Course Area</b>	<b>Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program</b>	<b>Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement</b>
English/Language arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4
Science	3	4
Social studies, including Economics	3	3
Physical education	1	1
Language other than English	2	2
Fine arts	1	1
Locally required courses	.5 credit in Health .5 credit in Speech 1 credit in Tech Apps	.5 credit in Health .5 credit in Speech 1 credit in Tech Apps
Electives	4	6

Miscellaneous		Available Endorsements****: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Business and Industry Public Services Arts and Humanities Multidisciplinary Studies
<b>Total</b>	<b>23 credits</b>	<b>27 credits</b>

## Credits Required, Class of 2023 and There After

Course Area	Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program	Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement
English/Language arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4
Science	3	4
Social studies, including Economics	3	3
Physical education	1	1
Language other than English	2	2
Fine arts	1	1
Locally required courses	.5 credit in Health .5 credit in Speech 1 credit in Tech Apps	.5 credit in Health .5 credit in Speech 1 credit in Tech Apps
Electives	3	5

Miscellaneous		Available Endorsements****: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Business and Industry Public Services Arts and Humanities Multidisciplinary Studies
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 credits</b>	<b>26 credits</b>

Additional considerations apply in some course areas, including:

- **Mathematics.** To obtain the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program, which will be included on a student’s transcript and is a requirement to be considered for automatic admission to a Texas four-year college or university, a student must complete an endorsement and take Algebra II as one of the 4 mathematics credits.
- **Physical education.** A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to a disability or illness may be able to substitute a course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, or another locally determined credit-bearing course for the required credit of physical education. This determination will be made by the student’s ARD committee, Section 504 committee, or other campus committee, as applicable.
- **Languages other than English.** Students are required to earn 2 credits in the same language other than English to graduate. Any student may substitute computer programming languages for these credits. A student may satisfy one of the two required credits by successfully completing in elementary school a dual language immersion program or a course in American Sign Language. In limited circumstances, a student may be able to substitute this requirement with other courses, as determined by a district committee authorized by law to make these decisions for the student.

**Available Endorsements**

A student must specify upon entering grade 9 which endorsement he or she wishes to pursue:

- Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM),
- Business and industry,
- Public services,
- Arts and humanities, or
- Multidisciplinary studies.

**Personal Graduation Plans**

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each high school student. The district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at

least one endorsement and to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement entitles a student to be considered for automatic admission to a public four-year college or university in Texas, depending on his or her rank in class. The school will review personal graduation plan options with each student entering grade 9 and his or her parent. Before the end of grade 9, a student and his or her parent will be required to sign off on a personal graduation plan that includes a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement, as well as facilitates the transition from secondary to postsecondary education. The student's personal graduation plan will denote an appropriate course sequence based on the student's choice of endorsement.

Please review [TEA's Graduation Toolkit](#).

A student may, with parental permission, amend his or her personal graduation plan after the initial confirmation.

### ***Available Course Options for All Graduation Programs***

Information regarding specific courses required or offered in each curriculum area will be distributed to students each spring to enroll in courses for the upcoming school year.

**Note:** The district may require the completion of certain courses for graduation even if these courses are not required by the state for graduation.

Please be aware that not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the district. A student who wants to take a course not offered at his or her regular campus should contact the school counselor about a transfer or other alternatives. If the parents of at least 22 students request a transfer for those students to take a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or career and technical education (CTE), the district will offer the course for the following year either by teleconference or at the school from which the transfers were requested.

### ***Certificates of Coursework Completion***

A certificate of coursework completion *will not* be issued to a student who has successfully completed state and local credit requirements for graduation but has not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on the state-mandated tests required for graduation.

### ***Students with Disabilities***

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, a student with a disability who receives special education services may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her individualized education program (IEP) and in accordance with state rules.

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete

the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

[See policy FMH(LEGAL).]

ARD committees for students with disabilities who receive special education services will make instructional and assessment decisions for these students in accordance with state law and rules. A student who receives special education services may earn an endorsement under the foundation program. If the student's curriculum requirements for the endorsement were modified, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the modified curriculum is sufficiently rigorous for purposes of earning the endorsement. The ARD committee must also determine whether the student must perform satisfactorily on any end-of-course assessment instrument required to earn an endorsement.

### ***Graduation Activities***

Graduation activities will include:

- Practice the day of graduation
- Graduation ceremony

Students who have met coursework requirements for graduation but have not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on end-of-course assessments and have not been declared eligible to graduate by an individual graduation committee, if applicable, will be allowed to participate in graduation activities. However, please keep in mind that participating in the activities and ceremonies is not synonymous with graduating. Ultimately, the final awarding of a diploma will be contingent upon the student's completion of all applicable requirements for graduation.

### ***Graduation Speakers***

Certain graduating students will be given an opportunity to have speaking roles at graduation ceremonies.

A student must meet local eligibility criteria, which may include requirements related to student conduct, to have a speaking role. Students eligible for speaking roles will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer.

[See FNA(LOCAL) and the Student Code of Conduct. For student speakers at other school events, see **Student Speakers** on page 100.]

### ***Graduation Expenses***

Because students and parents will incur expenses to participate in the traditions of graduation—such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture—both the student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. [See **Fees** on page 60.]

## ***Scholarships and Grants***

Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the foundation graduation program, may be eligible under the TEXAS Grant Program and the Teach for Texas Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions.

Contact the school counselor for information about other scholarships and grants available to students.

## **Harassment**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 50.]

## **Hazing (All Grade Levels)**

Hazing is defined by Section 37.151 of the Education Code as an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in a student organization if the act meets the elements in Education Code 37.151, including:

- Any type of physical brutality;
- An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances;
- An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the Penal Code; and
- Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated.

Hazing will not be tolerated by the district. If an incident of hazing occurs, disciplinary consequences will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent.

[See **Bullying** on page 34 and policies FFI and FNCC.]

## **Health-Related Matters**

### ***Student Illness (All Grade Levels)***

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not be attending that day. It is important to remember that schools are required to exclude students with certain

illnesses from school for periods of time as identified in state rules. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. In addition, students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea-free without diarrhea-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours. A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school nurse.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. If the nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

The district is also required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions.

Contact the school nurse if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether or not your child should stay home.

### ***Bacterial Meningitis (All Grade Levels)***

State law requires the district to provide information about bacterial meningitis:

#### **What is meningitis?**

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is common, and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

#### **What are the symptoms?**

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 2 years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

#### **How serious is bacterial meningitis?**

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases, it can be fatal, or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

### **How is bacterial meningitis spread?**

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. They are spread when people exchange respiratory or throat secretions (such as by kissing, coughing, or sneezing).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

### **How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?**

Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It's a good idea not to share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis. The vaccines are safe and effective (85–90 percent). They can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

### **What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?**

You should seek prompt medical attention.

### **Where can you get more information?**

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the websites for the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), particularly the CDC's information on [bacterial meningitis](#), and the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#).

**Note:** DSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination on or after the student's 11th birthday, unless the student received the vaccine at age 10. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

[See **Immunization** on page 80 for more information.]

### ***Food Allergies (All Grade Levels)***

The district requests to be notified when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially those allergies that could result in dangerous or possibly life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic, as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, based on the Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) "Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis." The district's management plan addresses employee training, dealing with common food allergens, and specific strategies for dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies. When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed at [www.wisd.us](http://www.wisd.us).

The complete text of the "Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis" can be found on the DSHS website at [Allergies and Anaphylaxis](#).

[See policy FFAF and **Celebrations** on page 36.]

### ***Head Lice (All Grade Levels)***

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time, and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to determine whether the student will need to be picked up from school and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return.

Notice will also be provided to parents of elementary school students in the affected classroom.

More information on head lice can be obtained from the DSHS website [Managing Head Lice](#).

[See policy FFAA.]

## ***Physical Activity Requirements***

### **Elementary School**

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in full-day prekindergarten–grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week.

For additional information on the district’s requirements and programs regarding elementary school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

### **Junior High / Middle School**

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in middle or junior high school will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters OR at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within each two-week period for at least four semesters.

For additional information on the district’s requirements and programs regarding junior high and middle school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

### **Temporary Restriction from Participation in Physical Education**

Students who are temporarily restricted from participation in physical education will remain in the class and shall continue to learn the concepts of the lessons but not actively participate in the skill demonstration.

### ***School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)*** ***(All Grade Levels)***

During the preceding school year, the district’s School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held 4 meetings. Additional information regarding the district’s SHAC is available from the Parental Involvement Director, Erica Garcia at (956)969-6600.

The duties of the SHAC include:

- Making recommendations regarding physical and mental health curriculum.
- Developing strategies for integrating curriculum into a coordinated school health program encompassing issues such as school health services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, recess recommendations, improving student fitness, mental health concerns, substance abuse prevention, and employee wellness.
- Making recommendations for increasing parents’ awareness of warning signs of suicide and mental health risks and community mental health and suicide prevention services

[See policies at BDF and EHAA. See **Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 14 for additional information.]

***Seizures***  
***(All Grade Levels)***

To address the care of a student with a seizure disorder while at school or participating in a school activity, a parent may submit a seizure management and treatment plan to the district before the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment of the student, or as soon as practicable following a diagnosis of a seizure disorder for the student. For more information, contact the school nurse.

For more information, see “**A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504**” on page 26.

***Student Wellness Policy / Wellness Plan***  
***(All Grade Levels)***

Weslaco ISD is committed to encouraging healthy students and therefore has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement the policy. You are encouraged to contact Oscar Riojas with questions about the content or implementation of the district’s wellness policy and plan.

***Other Health-Related Matters***  
***(All Grade Levels)***

**Physical Fitness Assessment**  
**(Grades 3–12)**

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3–12 who are enrolled in a physical education course or a course for which physical education credit is awarded. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to the campus principal to obtain the results of his or her child’s physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

**Vending Machines**  
**(All Grade Levels)**

The district has adopted and implemented the state and federal policies and guidelines for food service, including the guidelines to restrict student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines, see the *School Nutrition Director, Dora Peña*. [See policies at CO and FFA.]

**Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited**  
**(All Grade Levels and All Others on School Property)**

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), or any other electronic vaporizing device, while on school property at any time or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of all tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or any other electronic vaporizing device, by students and all others on school

property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policies at FNCD and GKA.]

### **Asbestos Management Plan (All Grade Levels)**

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district's Asbestos Management Plan is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact Enrique Reyes, the district's designated asbestos coordinator, at (956)969-6515.

### **Pest Management Plan (All Grade Levels)**

The district is required to follow integrated pest management (IPM) procedures to control pests on school grounds. Although the district strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, periodic indoor and outdoor pesticide use is sometimes necessary to maintain adequate pest control and ensure a safe, pest-free school environment.

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who have questions or who want to be notified of the times and types of applications prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Martin Rodriguez, the district's IPM coordinator, at (956)969-6947.

### **Illness**

[See **Student Illness** under **Health-Related Matters** on page 74.]

### **Immunization (All Grade Levels)**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at [Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunization](#). The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis; rubeola (measles), mumps, and rubella; polio; hepatitis A; hepatitis B; varicella (chicken pox); and meningococcal. The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-

validated history of illness required by TDSHS. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. registered and licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or a member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a lifelong condition.

As noted at **Bacterial Meningitis** on page 75, entering college students must also, with limited exception, furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five years prior to enrolling in and attending classes at an institution of higher education. A student wanting to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus may be subject to this requirement.

[For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the DSHS website: [Texas School & Child Care Facility Immunization Requirements.](#)]

## **Law Enforcement Agencies (All Grade Levels)**

### ***Questioning of Students***

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

### ***Students Taken into Custody***

State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation.

- By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs to establish a student's identity, where the child may have engaged in conduct indicating a need for supervision, such as running away.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services (CPS), Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive from a juvenile court to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

### ***Notification of Law Violations***

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been taken into custody, arrested, or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who is thought to have committed certain offenses or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.
- All appropriate district personnel regarding a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

[For further information, see policy FL(LEGAL).]

### **Leaving Campus (All Grade Levels)**

Please remember that student attendance is crucial to learning. We ask that appointments be scheduled outside of school hours as much as reasonably possible. Also note that picking up a student early on a regular basis results in missed opportunities for learning. Unless the principal

has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

State rules require that parental consent be obtained before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day. The district has put the following procedures in place to document parental consent:

- For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.
- For students in high school, the same process will be followed. If the student's parent will authorize the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note to be submitted for documentation purposes. Once the office has received information that the student's parent consents to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to hand to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day. If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may produce a note on his or her own behalf. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.
- If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school. Unless directed by the parent to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student's parent, or if the student is age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released. Under no circumstances will a student in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied by a parent or adult authorized by the parent.

### ***During Lunch***

Weslaco ISD campuses are closed campuses. Students may not leave during their lunch period unless they are signed out following all campus procedures.

### ***At Any Other Time during the School Day***

Students are not authorized to leave campus during regular school hours for any other reason, except with the permission of the principal.

Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Lost and Found (All Grade Levels)**

A “lost and found” collection box is located in the campus office. If your child has lost an item, please encourage him or her to check the lost and found box. The district discourages students from bringing to school personal items of high monetary value, as the district is not responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus will dispose of lost and found items at the end of each semester.

### **Makeup Work**

#### ***Makeup Work Because of Absence (All Grade Levels)***

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold regarding the state laws surrounding “attendance for credit or final grade.” [See **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** on page 30.]

A student involved in an extracurricular activity must notify his or her teachers ahead of time about any absences.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with timelines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

#### ***DAEP Makeup Work***

#### **Elementary and Middle / Junior High School Grade Levels**

##### **Grades 9–12**

A high school student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school

year, a foundation curriculum course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the course through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA(LEGAL).]

***In-School Suspension (ISS) and Out-of-School-Suspension (OSS)  
Makeup Work  
(All Grade Levels)***

***Completion of Course Work***

While a student is in ISS or OSS, the district will provide the student with all course work for the student's foundation curriculum classes that the student misses as a result of the suspension.

**Completion of Courses**

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FO(LEGAL).]

**Medicine at School  
(All Grade Levels)**

Medication that must be administered to a student during school hours must be provided by the student's parent. All medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be kept in the nurse's office and administered by the nurse or another authorized district employee, unless the student is authorized to possess his or her own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy as described below or as otherwise allowed by law.

The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student. District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

Only authorized employees, in accordance with policy FFAC, may administer:

- Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
- Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
- Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request. **Note:** Insect repellent is considered a nonprescription medication.

- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

Students whose schedules provide for regular time spent outdoors, including for recess and physical education classes, should apply sunscreen before coming to school.

For students at the elementary level, the student's teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to a student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and requests assistance with the application of the sunscreen. Nothing prohibits a student at this level from applying his or her own sunscreen if the student is able to do so.

For students at the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If the student will need assistance with this application, please address the need for assistance with the school nurse.

Whether a student is at the elementary or secondary level, if sunscreen needs to be administered to treat any type of medical condition, this should be handled through communication with the school nurse so that the district is made aware of any safety and medical issues.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and to the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal.

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL).]

### ***Psychotropic Drugs***

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policy FFAC.]

## **Nondiscrimination Statement (All Grade Levels)**

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Weslaco ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law, in providing education services, activities, and programs, including CTE programs, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following district representatives have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment or gender-based harassment: Sergio Garcia, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, 319 W. Fourth Street, Weslaco; (956)969-6511.
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: [Neil Garza, Special Education Director, 503 E. Sixth Street, Weslaco; (956)969-6822].
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent, Dr. Priscilla Canales, (956)969-6500.

[See policies FB, FFH, and GKD.]

## **Parent and Family Engagement (All Grade Levels)**

### ***Working Together***

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. Your involvement and engagement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 47.]

- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office at for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 92.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policy GKG and **Volunteers** on page 105.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: booster clubs and PTOs (see individual campus principal for information).
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. [For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact [Parental Involvement Director, Erica Garcia at (956)969-6600.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness issues. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)** on page 78.]
- Being aware of the school’s ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child’s emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

## **Physical Examinations / Health Screenings**

### **Athletics Participation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

A student who wishes to participate in, or continue participation in, the district’s athletics program governed by the UIL must submit certification from a health-care provider authorized under UIL rules that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the athletic program. This examination is required to be submitted annually to the district.

Students should be aware of the rare possibility of sudden cardiac arrest, which in athletes is usually caused by a previously unsuspected heart disease or disorder. A student may request an electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) to screen for such disorders, in addition to his or her required physical examination.

For more information, see the UIL’s explanation of [sudden cardiac arrest](#).

### ***Spinal Screening Program***

School-based spinal screening helps identify adolescents with abnormal spinal curvature and refer them for appropriate follow-up by their physician. Screening can detect scoliosis at an

early stage, when the curve is mild and may go unnoticed. Early detection is key to controlling spinal deformities.

All students who meet the Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. For information on spinal screening by an outside professional or exemption from spinal screening based on religious beliefs, see policy FFAA(LEGAL) or contact the superintendent.

Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted following the most recent, nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards for spinal screening.

### ***Other Examinations and Screenings*** **(All Grade Levels)**

Students are required to undergo a risk assessment for Type 2 diabetes at the same time the district screens students for hearing and vision issues, or for abnormal spinal curvatures.

[See policy FFAA.]

### **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** **(All Grade Levels)**

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 15.]

State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. In addition, state law requires that each campus provide for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

[See policy EC for more information.]

### **Prayer** **(All Grade Levels)**

Each student has a right to pray individually, voluntarily, and silently or to meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

### **Promotion and Retention**

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level, the recommendation of the student's teacher, the score received on any criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessment, and any other necessary academic information as determined by the district.

In addition, at certain grade levels a student—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and the date of the first administration of the STAAR.

### ***Elementary and Middle / Junior High Grade Levels***

In grades 1 – 2, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on the student’s ability to read within one-half year of grade level and a grade of 70 in at least three of the following areas: reading, composition, mathematics, science, and social studies.

In grades 3 – 5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on the student’s ability to read within one-half year of grade level and a grade of 70 in at least three of the following areas: reading, composition, mathematics, science, and social studies. Proficiency on the reading portion of the state-mandated assessment shall supersede all reading-level criteria.

In grades 6 – 8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in three of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

In grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned.

To be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 assessment in English or Spanish.

To be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 assessment in English.

If a student in grade 5 or 8 is enrolled in a course that earns high school credit and for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment will be administered, the student will not be subject to the promotion requirements described above for the relevant grade 5 or 8 assessment. The student will instead take the corresponding EOC assessment.

If a student in grades 3–8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above his or her current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be required to take an applicable state-mandated assessment only for the course in which he or she is enrolled, unless otherwise required to do so by federal law.

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 98.]

A student in grade 5 or 8 will have two additional opportunities to take a failed assessment. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the student’s parent, will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third failed attempt, the student will be retained;

however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. For the student to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the district, the decision of the committee must be unanimous, and the student must complete additional special instruction before beginning the next grade level. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policy EIE.]

Certain students—some with disabilities and some classified as English learners—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee meeting will be convened if a student receiving special education services in grade 5 or 8 fails to meet satisfactory performance after the first STAAR administrations in reading or math. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

Parents of a student at or above grade level 3 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state-mandated examinations, will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year. Failure of a student to attend these programs may result in violations of required school attendance as well as the student not being promoted to the next grade level.

A personal graduation plan (PGP) will be prepared for any student at the middle school or junior high level who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment or is determined by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year following enrollment in grade 9. The PGP will be designed and implemented by a school counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the student's educational goals, address the parent's educational expectations for the student, and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. [For additional information, see the school counselor and policy EIF(LEGAL).] For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

[For information related to the development of personal graduation plans for high school students, see **Personal Graduation Plans** on page 71.]

### ***High School Grade Levels***

To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [See **Grade Level Classification** on page 61.]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See **Graduation** on page 67 and **Standardized Testing** on page 98 for more information about EOC assessments.]

### **Release of Students from School**

[See **Leaving Campus** on page 82.]

## **Report Cards / Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels)**

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued at least once every six weeks.

At the end of the *first three weeks of a grading period*, parents will receive a progress report. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. [See **Working Together** on page 87 for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the *principal* pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See policy EIA(LOCAL) and **Grading Guidelines** on page 62.]

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG(LOCAL).

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within seven days. The district may use an electronic program to communicate academic information about your child, including for report card and progress reporting purposes. An electronic signature of the parent will be accepted by the district, but you are entitled to request the option to provide a handwritten signature of acknowledgment instead.

## **Retaliation**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 50.]

## **Safety (All Grade Levels)**

Student safety on campus, at school-related events, and on district vehicles is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student is expected to:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, campus behavior coordinator, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member. A

student may make anonymous reports about safety concerns by calling the principal or the district at (956)969-6500.

- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

### ***Accident Insurance***

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

### ***Insurance for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs***

If the board purchases accident, liability, or automobile insurance coverage for students or businesses involved in the district's CTE programs, the district will notify the affected students and parents.

### ***Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies***

Occasionally, students, teachers, and other district employees will participate in preparedness drills of emergency procedures. When the command is given or alarm is sounded, students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Students in grades 7–12 will annually be offered instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see [Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed](#) and [Stop the Bleed Texas](#).

### ***Emergency Medical Treatment and Information***

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school may have to rely on previously provided written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, all parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

### ***Emergency School-Closing Information***

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early or opening is delayed because of severe weather or another emergency, or if the campus must restrict access due to a security threat.

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number previously provided to the district has changed.

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will also alert the community in the following ways: automated phone system; social media; local media outlets.

[See **Communications-Automated, Emergency** on page 44 for more information.]

## **SAT, ACT, and Other Standardized Tests**

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 98.]

## **School Facilities**

### ***Use by Students Before and After School (All Grade Levels)***

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place. Specific information for each campus is available from the campus principal.

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing an activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

After dismissal of school in the afternoon, unless a student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult, or unless students are granted permission to remain on campus in accordance with policy FNAB, students must leave campus immediately.

### ***Conduct Before and After School (All Grade Levels)***

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

### ***Use of Hallways during Class Time (All Grade Levels)***

Loitering or standing in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### ***Cafeteria Services (All Grade Levels)***

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily in accordance with standards set forth in state and federal law.

Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need or household situation. Information about a student's participation is confidential. The district may share information such as a student's name and eligibility status to help enroll eligible children in Medicaid or the state children's health insurance program (CHIP) unless the student's parent notifies the district that a student's information should not be disclosed.

Participating students will be offered the same meal options as their peers and will not be treated differently from their peers.

See Dora Peña, (956)969-6593 to apply for free or reduced-price meal services.

See CO for more information.

Parents are strongly encouraged to continually monitor their child's meal account balance. When a student's meal account is depleted, the district will notify the parent. The student will be allowed to continue purchasing meals according to the grace period set by the school board, and the district will present the parent with a schedule of repayment for any outstanding account balance and an application for free or reduced meals. If the district is unable to work out an agreement with the student's parent on replenishment of the student's meal account and payment of any outstanding balance, the student will receive a meal. The district will make every effort to avoid bringing attention to the student.

### ***Library (All Grade Levels)***

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for independent student use during times set by each campus. Please see the campus principal or school librarian for additional information.

### ***Meetings of Non-curriculum-Related Groups (Secondary Grade Levels Only)***

Student-organized, student-led noncurriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB(LOCAL).

A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

### ***School-sponsored Field Trips (All Grade Levels)***

The district periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes.

A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip.

The district may ask the parent to provide information about a student's medical provider and insurance coverage, and may also ask the parent to sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip.

The district may require a fee for student participation in a field trip to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however, a student will not be denied participation because of financial need.

## **Searches**

### ***District Property*** **(All Grade Levels)**

Desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the district and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. District property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice. Students have no expectation of privacy in district property.

Students are responsible for any item—found in district property provided to the student—that is prohibited by law, district policy, or the Student Code of Conduct.

### ***Searches in General*** **(All Grade Levels)**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may occasionally conduct searches.

District officials may conduct searches of students, their belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with law and district policy. Searches of students will be conducted without discrimination, based on, for example, reasonable suspicion, voluntary consent, or pursuant to district policy providing for suspicionless security procedures, including the use of metal detectors.

In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, students are responsible for prohibited items found in their possession, including items in their personal belongings or in vehicles parked on district property.

If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that searching a student's person, belongings, or vehicle will reveal evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, a district official may conduct a search in accordance with law and district regulations.

### ***Vehicles on Campus*** **(Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the district will contact the student's parents. If the parents also refuse to permit the vehicle to be searched, the district may contact law enforcement officials and turn the matter over to them. The district may contact law enforcement even if permission to search is granted.

***Metal Detectors  
(All Grade Levels)***

To maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment, the district reserves the right to subject students to metal detector searches when entering a district campus and at off-campus, school-sponsored activities.

***Trained Dogs  
(All Grade Levels)***

The district will use trained dogs to screen for concealed, prohibited items, including drugs and alcohol. Screenings conducted by trained dogs will not be announced in advance. The dogs will not be used with students, but students may be asked to leave personal belongings in an area that is going to be screened, such as a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle. If a dog alerts to an item or an area, it may be searched by district officials.

***Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices  
(All Grade Levels)***

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district. [See policy CQ for more information.]

Any searches of personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

[See policy FNF(LEGAL) and **Electronic Devices and Technology Resources** on page 56 for more information.]

***Drug Testing  
(Secondary Grade Levels Only)***

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL)] [See **Steroids** on page 99.]

**Sexual Harassment**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 50.]

**Special Programs  
(All Grade Levels)**

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, students who are homeless, students in foster care, bilingual students, migrant students, English learners, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the campus principal.

A student who has or is at risk for dyslexia or a related reading difficulty is eligible to participate in the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's [Talking Book Program](#), which provides audiobooks free of charge to qualifying Texans with visual, physical, or reading disabilities.

## **Standardized Testing**

### ***Secondary Grade Levels***

#### **SAT / ACT**

#### **(Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)**

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the school counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate examination to take; these examinations are usually taken at the end of the junior year. The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and ACT-Aspire are the corresponding preparatory and readiness assessments for the SAT and ACT, and more information can be obtained on these assessments from the school counselor.

**Note:** Participation in these assessments may qualify a student to receive a performance acknowledgment on his or her transcript under the foundation graduation program and may qualify as a substitute for an end-of-course testing requirement in certain circumstances. A student's performance at a certain level on the SAT or ACT also makes the student eligible for automatic admission to a Texas public institution of higher education.

#### **TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment**

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual credit course offered through the district as well. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment for college readiness may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

#### **STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)**

##### **Grades 3–8**

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels are required to take the state assessment, called STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law for the student to be promoted to the next grade level, unless the student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student's current grade level. Exceptions may apply for students enrolled in a special education program if the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee concludes the student has made sufficient progress in the student's individualized education plan (IEP). [See **Promotion and Retention** on page 89 for additional information.]

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services who meet certain state-established criteria as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR Spanish is available for eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

### **High School Courses—End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments**

STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I
- English I and English II
- Biology
- U.S. History

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation, unless otherwise waived or substituted as allowed by state law and rules.

There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment, which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment.

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services who meet certain criteria established by the state as determined by the student's ARD committee.

An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for a student receiving special education services will determine whether successful performance on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation within the parameters identified in state rules and the student's personal graduation plan (PNP).

[See **Graduation** on page 67 for additional information.]

### **Steroids (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use.

Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

### **Students in Foster Care (All Grade Levels)**

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district will assist any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care) with the enrollment and registration process, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment in the district.

Please contact Norma Brewer, who has been designated as the district's foster care liaison, at (956)969-6747 with any questions.

[See **Students in the Conservatorship of the State** on page 22 for more information.]

### **Students Who are Homeless (All Grade Levels)**

A parent is encouraged to inform the district if his or her child is experiencing homelessness. District staff can share resources that may be able to assist families.

For more information on services for students who are homeless, contact the district's homeless education liaison, Erica Garcia, at (956)969-6602.

[See **Students Who Are Homeless** on page 23.]

### **Student Speakers (All Grade Levels)**

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce at various school events: If a student meets the eligibility criteria and wishes to introduce one of the school events, the student should submit his or her name to the campus principal.

[See **Graduation** on page 67 for information related to student speakers at graduation ceremonies.]

### **Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention (All Grade Levels)**

If you are worried that your child may be using or is in danger of experimenting, using, or abusing illegal drugs or other prohibited substances, please contact the school counselor. The school counselor can provide you with a list of community resources that may be of assistance to you. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) maintains information regarding children's mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its website: [Mental Health and Substance Abuse](#).

## **Suicide Awareness and Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)**

The district is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please visit [Texas Suicide Prevention](#) or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention services available in your area.

You may also contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

## **Summer School (All Grade Levels)**

Summer school programs are offered each year. The district will notify students and parents of all summer offerings prior to the end of the regular school year.

## **Tardies (All Grade Levels)**

A student who is tardy to class by more than 3 minutes may be assigned to detention hall or given another appropriate consequence.

## **Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials (All Grade Levels)**

Textbooks and other district-approved instructional materials are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Any books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. Electronic textbooks and technological equipment may also be provided to students, depending on the course and course objectives.

If the district does not issue graphing calculators for a course requiring their use, a student may use a calculator application with the same functionality as a graphing calculator on a phone, laptop, tablet, or other computing device in place of a graphing calculator.

A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

## **Transfers (All Grade Levels)**

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another.

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 21, **Bullying** on page 34, and **Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 24, for other transfer options.]

## **Transportation (All Grade Levels)**

### ***School-sponsored Trips***

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. As approved by the principal, a coach or sponsor of an extracurricular activity may establish procedures related to making an exception to this requirement when a parent requests that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent. [See **School-sponsored Field Trips** on page 95 for more information.]

### ***Buses and Other School Vehicles***

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school and any students who are homeless. This service is provided at no cost to students.

Bus routes and stops will be designated annually, and any subsequent changes will be posted at the school and on the district's website. For the safety of the operator of the vehicle and all passengers, students must board buses or other vehicles only at authorized stops, and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.

The district has identified the following areas where hazardous traffic conditions and/or areas presenting a high risk of violence exist for students who live within two miles of the campus:

#### **Major Road Ways & Conditions**

Running East and West

Business Hwy 83

Expressway 83/IH 2

#### **Major Road Ways & Conditions**

Running North and South

Mile 6 W (Westgate Drive)

FM 88 (Texas Blvd.)

FM 1015 (International Blvd.)

Because students in these areas might encounter hazardous traffic conditions or be subject to areas presenting a high risk of violence when walking to and from school, the district will provide transportation to these students. Please contact Lupe Garcia, (956)969-6860 for additional information.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact Lupe Garcia, (956)969-6860.

[See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.]

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses and other district vehicles remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district

vehicles, including buses, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the vehicle or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the vehicle.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco or e-cigarettes in any district vehicle.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; the privilege to ride in a district vehicle, including a school bus, may be suspended or revoked.

### **Vandalism (All Grade Levels)**

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come—littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Video Cameras (All Grade Levels)**

For safety purposes, video and audio recording equipment is used to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video and audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

In accordance with state law, a parent of a student who receives special education services, a staff member (as this term is defined by law), a principal or assistant principal, or the board may make a written request for the district to place video and audio recording equipment in

certain self-contained special education classrooms. The district will provide notice to before placing a video camera in a classroom or other setting in which your child receives special education services. For more information or to request the installation and operation of this equipment, speak with the principal who the district has designated to coordinate the implementation of and compliance with this law.

[See EHBAF(LOCAL).]

## **Visitors to the School (All Grade Levels)**

### ***General Visitors***

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the main office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, all parents and other visitors should be prepared to show identification.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. Even if the visit is approved prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must check in at the main office first.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

### ***Unauthorized Persons***

In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator, school resource officer (SRO), or district police officer has the authority to refuse entry or eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and:

- The person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person; or
- The person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and the person persists in the behavior after being given a verbal warning that the behavior is inappropriate and may result in refusal of entry or ejection.

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL).

[See the Student Code of Conduct.]

### ***Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students***

#### **Business, Civic, and Youth Groups**

The district may invite representatives from patriotic societies listed in Title 36 of the United States Code to present information to interested students about membership in the society.

## **Career Day**

Throughout the school year, each campus may invite representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

## **Volunteers (All Grade Levels)**

We appreciate so much the efforts of parent and grandparent volunteers that are willing to serve our district and students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Erica Garcia, Parental Involvement Director, (956)969-6600 for more information and to complete an application.

## **Voter Registration (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

A student who is eligible to vote in any local, state, or federal election may obtain a voter registration application at the main campus office.

## **Withdrawing from School (All Grade Levels)**

When a student under age 18 withdraws from school, the parent or guardian must submit a written request to the principal, specifying the reasons for withdrawal and the final day the student will be in attendance. Withdrawal forms are available from the principal's office.

A student who is age 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without parental signature.

Please provide the school at least three days' notice of withdrawal so that records and documents may be prepared.

## Glossary

**Accelerated instruction** is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level and/or as a result of a student not meeting the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

**ACT**, or the American College Test, is one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required for admission to certain colleges or universities.

**ACT-Aspire** refers to an assessment that took the place of ACT-Plan and is designed as a preparatory and readiness assessment for the ACT. This is usually taken by students in grade 10.

**ARD** stands for admission, review, and dismissal. The ARD committee convenes for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student and his or her parents are members of the committee.

**Attendance review committee** is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent, or in some cases 75 percent, of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences.

**CPS** stands for Child Protective Services.

**DAEP** stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

**DFPS** is the Texas Department of Family Protective Services.

**DPS** stands for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

**EOC (end-of-course) assessments** are state-mandated and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments are required for graduation. These examinations will be given in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History.

**ESSA** is the federal Every Student Succeeds Act passed in December 2015.

**FERPA** refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, which grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

**IEP** stands for individualized education program and is the written record prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be

measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or districtwide tests; whether successful completion of state-mandated assessments is required for graduation, etc.

**IGC** is the individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, to determine a student's eligibility to graduate when the student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory performance on no more than two of the required state assessments.

**ISS** refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

**PGP** stands for personal graduation plan, which is required for high school students and for any student in middle school who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

**PSAT** is the preparatory and readiness assessment for the SAT. It also serves as the basis for the awarding of National Merit Scholarships.

**SAT** refers to the Scholastic Aptitude Test, one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

**SHAC** stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to assist the district in ensuring that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, along with providing assistance with other student and employee wellness issues.

**Section 504** is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

**STAAR** is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments.

**STAAR Alternate 2** is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

**STAAR Spanish** is an alternative state-mandated assessment administered to eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

**State-mandated assessments** are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion and passing the STAAR EOC assessments is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary, for promotion or graduation.

**Student Code of Conduct** is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or district vehicle. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

**TAC** stands for the Texas Administrative Code.

**TELPAS** stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

**TSI** stands for the Texas Success Initiative, an assessment designed to measure the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering college-level freshmen students should have if they are to be successful in undergraduate programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

**TXVSN** stands for the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors, and courses are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide, voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

## **Appendix: Freedom from Bullying Policy**

**Note to Student Handbook developer:** State law requires that the district’s policy on bullying be distributed in its Student Handbook(s). The following has been formatted for the district to more easily insert its FFI(LOCAL) policy here rather than in the body of the handbook.

**Note:** School board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit *[insert a link to policy code FFI]*. Below is the text of *[your district’s name]’s* policy FFI(LOCAL) as of the date this handbook was finalized for this school year.

### **Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying**

Policy FFI(LOCAL) adopted on *[board adoption date]*

*[Paste the text of your bullying policy FFI(LOCAL) here as plain text (“Keep text only”), then reformat it with the handbook styles.]*

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