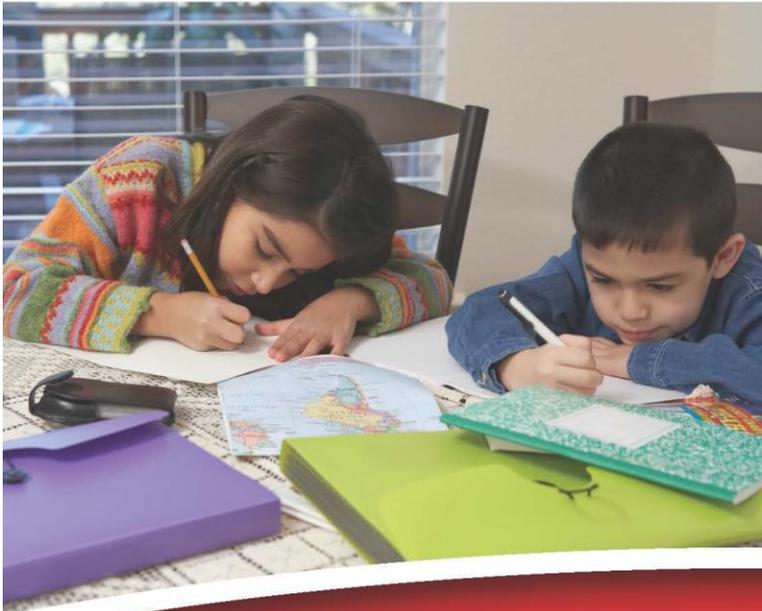




# BROWNSVILLE

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



## 2020-2021

# Student-Parent Handbook

Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
1900 Price Road • Brownsville, Texas 78521 • (956) 548-8121  
<http://www.bisd.us/curriculum/>

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## **BROWNSVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **CONTRACTUAL DISCLAIMER**

The provisions and information set forth in this handbook are intended to be informational and not contractual in nature. Thus, this handbook is not intended and shall not be construed to constitute a contract between the Brownsville Independent School District and any student, prospective student, agency of the local, state or federal government, or any other person or legal entity of any and every nature whatsoever.

The District hereby reserves and retains the right to amend, alter, change, delete, or modify any of the provisions of this handbook at any time, without notice, in any manner that the Administration or the Board of Trustees of the District deems to be in the best interest of the District. The contents of this student handbook apply to all students and programs in the District and do not amend, abridge or replace Board Policies of Administrative Regulations established by the District. As necessary, principals may include supplementary regulations and directives pertinent to their individual campuses. **Students and their parents/guardians are required to acknowledge they have received and read the 2020 – 2021 Student- Parent Handbook by signing and returning the Receipt Form.** A copy of this handbook may also be accessible and downloaded at [www.bisd.us](http://www.bisd.us) under the Students/Parents link, and a hardcopy can be found in the Principal's Office and/or the campus library.

Questions regarding BISD procedures and policies can be directed to:

Records Management/Policy Officer  
(956) 544-3972  
4310 Morrison Road, Brownsville, Texas 78521

### **NONDISCRIMINATION**

BISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability or genetic information in employment or provision of services, programs or activities, including vocational programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The following district staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these requirements:

- Section 504 for employee concerns regarding discrimination:  
Administrator for Certified Personnel/504 Administrator, 1900 Price Road, Suite #106, (956)548-8031.  
Administrator for Human Resources/Classified Personnel, 1900 Price Road, Suite #106,  
(956) 548-8051.
- Section 504 for student concerns regarding discrimination:  
Administrator for Dyslexia/504/Rtl, 708 Palm Blvd., Suite #227, (956) 548-8679.
- Title IX for employee and student concerns regarding discrimination:  
Assistant Superintendent/HR/Title IX, 1900 Price Road, Suite #104, (956) 698-0210.

#### **Services for the Homeless and for Title I Participants**

Other designated BISD staff you may need to contact include:

- Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths who coordinates services for homeless students: Diana Clough, 708 Palm Blvd., Suite #117 (956) 544-6612.
- Parent Involvement Coordinator who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs: Rosalva Larrasquitu, 708 Palm Blvd., Suite #124, (956) 548-8173.

#### **Services for Students with Special Needs**

Pursuant to students with special needs under federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 or the Rehabilitation Act of 1973), the district has a duty to identify, refer, evaluate and, if eligible, provide a free, appropriate public education to disabled students. For additional information, contact the administrator for Section 504/Rtl, 708 Palm Blvd., Suite #227, (956) 548-8679, or contact Special Services Department, 2467 Price Road, (956) 548-8400.

#### **Early Mental Health Intervention and Suicide Prevention – Student Welfare**

For information on early mental health intervention and suicide prevention programs, contact the administrator for Guidance and Counseling, 708 Palm Blvd., Suite #226, (956) 548-8251.

District personnel, parents and students must adhere to all protocols annotated in the BISD Crisis Intervention Procedural Manual, which can be accessed at the BISD Guidance and Counseling Department's website. Procedures must be followed to ensure the safety and well-being of all BISD students [FFB Local].

## ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

### ATTENDANCE FOR CREDIT [NO CREDIT POLICY]

**All Absences Considered-** In order to receive credit or a final grade for a class, a student is required to attend class 90% of the days class is offered regardless of whether the student's absences are **excused or unexcused [See FEC LEGAL]**.

In order to maintain credit, a student may not exceed the number of absences listed:

Elementary Schools..... 18 days per year

Middle Schools..... 8 days 1st semester, 10 days 2nd semester

High Schools..... 8 days 1st semester, 10 days 2nd semester

**Excused Absences** – Within 5 days of returning to school, the parent must submit a written note stating the reason for the student's absence. The student shall only be allowed 5 non-consecutive written excused absences per academic calendar year. Additional absences after 5 shall be unexcused unless excused by the campus principal **[See FEC LOCAL]**. The limitations on extracurricular or school-related absences are explained in the section entitled "Extracurricular Activities". District procedures for perfect attendance recognition are outlined in "Perfect Attendance Recognition." Campus Incentives and Awards will be available every 6 weeks for PK-12<sup>th</sup> graders who meet the District Student Attendance Goals. For a student with special needs who has excessive absences due to extended hospitalization and/or treatment sessions, the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee (ARDC) will meet to determine and document the options for regaining credit.

**Parent Conference for Excessive Absences** – If a student has been absent 5 days in a semester that have not been covered by an excuse signed by a doctor, nurse, or a clinic, the parent or guardian shall be required to come to school and speak with an administrator **[See FEC LOCAL]**.

**Parental Notice of Excessive Absences** – A student and the parent or guardian shall be given written notice prior to and at such time when a student's attendance in any class drops below 90% of the days the class is offered **[See FEC LOCAL]**.

**Principal's Plan** – A student who is **in attendance for less than 90%** of the days a class is offered may be given credit or a final grade if the student completes a plan approved by the school's principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class **[See FEC LEGAL]**.

**Methods for Regaining Credit** – The student may earn credit for the class or a final grade by completing a plan approved by the campus principal through the option Flexible School Day, which must provide for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class as determined by the campus principal. If the student fails to successfully complete the plan, then the student, parent or representative may request award of credit or a final grade by submitting a written petition to the appropriate attendance committee. Petition for credit or a final grade may be filed at any time the student receives notice, but in any event, no later than 15 days after the last day of classes.

**Campus Attendance Committee** – The attendance committee shall review the student's entire attendance record and the reasons for absences and shall determine whether to award credit or a final grade. Students who have lost credit or have not received a final grade because of excessive absences may regain credit or be awarded a final grade by fulfilling the requirements established by the attendance committee **[See FEC LOCAL]**.

#### Special Notes:

- For a student with a disability who has excessive absences due to a medical condition, the Section 504 committee will meet to determine and document options for regaining credit.
- For a student with special needs who has excessive absences due to extended hospitalization and/or treatment sessions, the ARD committee will meet to determine and document the options for regaining credit.

**Extenuating Circumstances** – The attendance committee shall adhere to the following guidelines to determine attendance for award of credit or a final grade **[See FEC LOCAL]**:

1. Days of attendance – if makeup work is completed satisfactorily, excused absences that are allowed under Compulsory Attendance requirements shall be considered **[See FEA LEGAL]**;
2. Transfers/ Migrant Students – student incurs absences only after his/her enrollment;
3. Best Interest Standard – the committee shall attempt to ensure that its decision is in the best interest of the student;
4. Documentation – the committee shall consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the students absences;
5. Consideration of Control – the committee shall consider whether the absences were for reasons out of the student's or parent's control;

6. Student's Academic Record – the committee shall consider whether or not the student has completed assignments, mastered that essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course of subject;
7. Information from Student or Parent – the student/parent shall be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to discuss ways to earn or gain credit or be awarded a final grade.

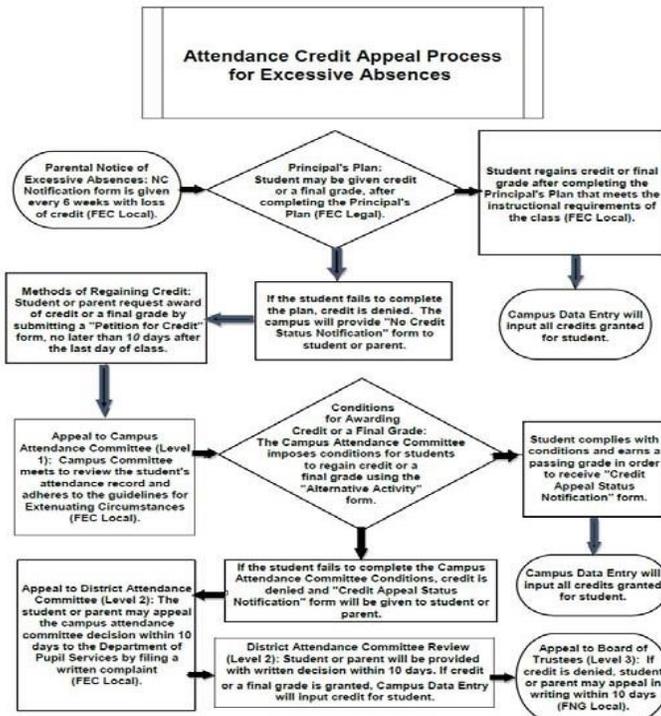
**Conditions for Awarding Credit or a Final Grade** – The attendance committee may impose any of the following conditions for students with excessive absences to regain credit or be awarded a final grade:

1. Completing additional assignments, specified by the committee or teacher;
2. Attending Tutorials, which may include Saturday classes or before school and after school programs;
3. Maintaining the attendance standards for the rest of the semester;
4. Taking an examination to earn credit [See EHDB];
5. Taking distance learning courses;
6. Undertaking independent student projects;
7. Complying with student contracts;
8. Taking computer-assisted instruction;
9. Participating in school/community services as assigned;
10. Completing other activities deems appropriate.

In all cases, the student must also earn a passing grade in order to receive credit. [See FEC LOCAL]

**Appeal Process-** If the student is denied credit or a final grade due to attendance, the student or parent may appeal the decision for the campus attendance committee (Level 1). Classroom teachers shall comprise a majority of the attendance committee [FEC LEGAL]. If a student or parent provides a written complaint form within 10 days after being informed of the denial of credit, the campus attendance committee will provide the student or parent a written response within 10 days [See FNG LOCAL]. The committee may give class credit to a student who is in attendance less than the days required if, in its opinion, there were extenuating circumstances, or if the student performs an assigned activity. For a student with special needs who has excessive absences due to extended hospitalization and/or treatment sessions, the ARD committee will meet to determine and document the options for regaining credit.

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested from the Campus Attendance Committee (Level 1), or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may request a conference with the Superintendent's designee, the Pupil Services Administrator, to appeal the campus decision (Level 1) to the District Attendance Committee. The district appeal notice (Level 2) must be filed in writing within 10 days of the campus response deadline at the Department of Pupil Services, 708 Palm Blvd., Suite #121 [See FNG LOCAL]. If the outcome of the hearing with the District Attendance Committee is not to the student's satisfaction, the student or parent may appeal to decision to the Board (Level 3) in accordance with FNG [See FEC LOCAL].



## **ATTENDANCE RECOGNITION**

Good attendance in school is directly related to student achievement. Individual schools sponsor various programs and activities that stress the importance of good attendance. Recognizing students who have perfect attendance is one way of doing this. "PERFECT ATTENDANCE" is as defined: No absences, tardies, or early releases for any part of the day that the student is scheduled to be in attendance at school with the exception of documented school business or school-related activities. Students approved to participate in school-related or school-sanctioned activities shall not be counted absent from school for perfect attendance recognition. Upon early release, a parent form will be signed stating the parent acknowledges that their child will not be eligible for the District Perfect Attendance Award for that six weeks and may not be eligible for the campus attendance award. The recognition of students who have perfect attendance shall be at the discretion of the school. Campus Incentives and Awards will be available at the end of each semester for PK-12<sup>th</sup> graders who meet the District Student Attendance Goals.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/NAME**

Students who move during the school year must notify the school office of their new address, telephone number and/or name change as soon as possible. This is done in order to enhance communication with parents. Documentation substantiating any changes should be submitted to school officials immediately.

## **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE**

State law requires that a student between the ages of 6 and 18 attend school [See Ed. Code 25.085], 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. A student shall receive full credit for assignments missed due to the following excused absences if the student satisfactorily completes the assignments within the number of school days equal to or commensurate with the number of school days absent. The District accepts the following as excused absences for a class if adequate documentation is provided [Refer to TEA Student Attendance Accounting Handbook]

- Extracurricular Activity
- Approved Field Trip
- Health Care Appointment
- Religious Holy Day
- UIL Activity
- Required Court Appearance
- Distinguished Achievement Program
- Dual Credit Program
- Election Clerk
- Government Office for U.S. Citizenship
- TAP – Military Veteran Funeral
- Visiting an Institution of Higher Education
- U.S. Naturalization Oath Ceremony
- Military Visit
- Pursuing Enlistment in U.S. Military

Students who are absent as a result of observance of religious holy days or documented health care appointments that make up the work missed may not be penalized for the absences (Ed. Code 25.087). The District shall excuse students from attending school for the purpose of observing religious holy days when it is a tenet of their faith at they must be absent from school during such time and if the parent submits a written request for the excused absence. Days missed to attend religious conventions are not considered excused absences.

As required by law, an 18 year old student must be allowed to register (Ed. Code 25.087). 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 an enrolled student is under the age of 6, or if a student is 19 or older, and that student has more than 5 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].

Students who are enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten are required to attend school. State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, or 2nd 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 who is in grades 3 – 8 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 applicable subject area.

## **Official Attendance**

The official attendance roll during the 2nd instructional hour for all grades will be as follows:

1. Elementary Schools 9:40 AM
2. Middle Schools 9:15 AM
3. High Schools 10:15 AM

### **Attendance Taking for Delayed Start of School Day**

If the Superintendent delays the start of the school for reasons related to health or safety (for example, because of flooding or bad weather), campuses will choose an alternative attendance taking time for that day. The campus must maintain documentation of the alternative time, the attendance recorded at that time, and the official reason for the delayed attendance taking (refer to PEIMS Student Attendance Accounting Handbook). The campus must contact computer services to set up an alternative attendance taking time for that day.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL OR RELEASE IN CUSTODY OF ADULTS**

Early dismissal will be granted for the same reasons allowed for excused absences. Students are encouraged to schedule appointments with their doctors or dentists other than during school hours. However, when emergency demands, the appointment should be made as early or as late in the school day as possible. Students who are leaving the campus for any reason must check out through the health clinic (nurse's office) and the school's main office. Upon early release, it is the campus option to have a parent sign an Early Release Form, stating the parent acknowledges that their child will not be eligible for the campus attendance award.

No student shall be taken from a class to talk with any adult or be permitted to leave school with any adult unless the identity of the adult and his or her relation to the student is clearly established to the satisfaction of the principal or designee. The administration will make every effort to notify the student's parents in every case. Parents must notify the campus administration in writing of the adult members of the family who are authorized to pick up their children from campus. Each school will use the District form for this purpose.

## **HOMELESS (As per McKinney-Vento Act)**

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. Homeless students have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if lacking the documentation normally required for enrollment, such as previous school records, medical or immunization records, proof of residency, birth certificate, proof of guardianship, or other documents. For more information, contact BISS Youth Connection Project, 708 Palm Blvd., Suite 117 (956) 544-6612.

## **HOME SCHOOLING [As per Policy FEA Local]**

Parents have the right to provide home schooling for their children. To be home schooled, the following must be met;

1. A letter, signed and dated, from the parent/guardian, stating that the student is being home schooled is acceptable documentation when addressed to the District and received by the campus administrator. Letters from parents/guardians must indicate the actual date home schooling began.
2. If the parents refuse to submit a letter of notification or if the District has evidence that the school-age child is not being home-schooled within legal requirements, the District may investigate further, and if warranted, shall pursue legal action to enforce the compulsory attendance law.

## **DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The following are considered directory information: student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status, honors and awards received in school, most recent school attended previously and e-mail address. A parent or guardian may prevent the release of any or all directory information regarding a student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within 10 school days after the parent or student has been provided notice and sign the Acknowledgement Forms provided at the beginning of the school year.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

All students must be immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement indicating that for medical or conscientious reasons, the student should not be immunized. State law requires the following immunizations: diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, homophiles, influenza type B, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis A, pneumococcal, meningococcal and varicella. School nurses can provide information on age-appropriate immunizations. Proof of immunization may be personal records by a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation provided it shows the day, the month, and the year of administration or disease. This information must be recorded in all new school records initiated, and updated in existing records. A TB test is required for all new students.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate, signed by a U.S. licensed physician that states that in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required would be harmful to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a lifelong contraindication.

To claim exclusion for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, a signed affidavit must be presented by the child's parent or guardian, stating that the child's parent or guardian declines vaccinations for reasons of conscience, including because of religious beliefs. **Instructions for the affidavit to be signed by parents/guardians choosing the exemption can be found at [www.ImmunizeTexas.com](http://www.ImmunizeTexas.com). This is the only form that will be accepted.** This exemption is valid for two years.

State law requires that current immunization records be submitted to the school registrar when the student enrolls. Failure to comply may result in enrollment delays.

## **REQUIRED IDENTIFICATION AND RECORDS**

Within 30 days of enrollment of their child(ren), parents/guardians must furnish the District with the following documents: child's birth certificate or another document suitable as proof of the child's identity, the child's most recent school records, and his/her current immunization records.

Student enrollment shall not be denied solely on the basis of failure to provide these records. If identification is not provided within 30 days of enrollment, the District shall notify the police or sheriff's department and inquire if the student has been reported as missing. To provide **false information** or **false records** to school personnel when enrolling a child is a **criminal offense** under the Penal Code.

Students who are entering District schools for the first time from another school must provide a clear book record and evidence of previous schooling (Report Card). By law, textbooks cannot be issued until a clear book record is presented.

## **RESIDENCY**

A student is required to attend the school appropriate for the student's grade level within the attendance area, where the student's custodial parent or legal guardian resides, unless a District approved transfer is provided to the campus. Proof of residency is required before enrolling [**See FD Legal, FD Local, Homeless Section and UIL Eligibility Rules**]. Individuals who provide false information to enroll in a non-zoned school will be withdrawn and sent to their zoned schools, losing the District approved transfer privilege for the remainder of the school year.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

A student's school records are confidential and protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Academic records are maintained indefinitely by the District. The student's inactive cumulative folder is sent to Records Management Office to be destroyed after 5 years. Attendance records are maintained for up to five years by the District.

**Access to Records:** If the student is under the age of 18, a parent is entitled access to all written records of the District concerning the parent's child, including attendance records, test scores, grades, disciplinary records, counseling records, psychological records, applications for admissions, health and immunization information, teacher and school counselor evaluations and reports of behavioral patterns [**Education Code 26.004**].

**Right to Amend Records:** The parent of a student may ask the District to amend the student's record if the parent believes it contains information that is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's right of privacy or other rights.

**Parental Consent:** The District shall not release any information that can be used on its own or with other information to identify contact, or locate a student without the parent's permission. The district may not release information from these records without parental consent except as provided in FERPA [**34 C.F.R. 300.622**].

**Written Consent:** The parent shall provide a signed and dated written consent before the District discloses personally identifiable information from a student's education records to any individual agency or organization other than the parent, the student, or those listed above. Such consent shall specify records to be released, the reason for such release, and to whom the records are to be released [**334 C.F.R. 99.30**].

## **TRANSFERS - INTRA-DISTRICT (6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade)**

When a student resides within BISD and is requesting a campus that is not within his/her attendance zone, the parent receives an intra-district transfer application, the parent receives an unofficial form that must be returned to the Department of Pupil Services, 708 Palm Blvd., Suite #121 for approval and signature. Approval of such a request shall be based on space availability and will follow departmental guidelines [**See FDB Local**]. An existing transfer request will be handled by the campus. The applications for intra-district transfers will become available on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

A parent applying for a student transfer shall provide the following: 1) proof of residence, 2) copy of student's birth Certificate, 3) photo identification card of person submitting the application, and 4) the student's school identification number or state number [**See FDB Local**].

Only one Intra-District transfer per student per school year shall be approved. An approved transfer may only be revoked at the end of a semester for the following reasons:

1. If the campus and respective grade level become overcrowded, or
2. If a parent fails to abide by the school standards for academic progress, attendance, discipline, and cooperation with school staff [**See FDB Local**].

A denial transfer may be appealed to the appropriate Area Assistant Superintendents for the zoned and requested schools [**See FDB Local**].

Transportation is the responsibility of the parent.

A student who engages in bullying or is a victim of bullying (includes cyberbullying) may be transferred to another class or another campus if it is opened for transfers. As a result, transfer students shall return to the home school. Students should check with their campus principals for additional details.

**NOTE:** An intra-district transfer does not imply eligibility to participate in extracurricular or UIL activities (athletics, band, etc.), special programs at the requested school, transportation, or placement in the student's present high school ranking at the requested school [**See UIL Requirements**].

## **TRANSFERS - INTER-DISTRICT**

When a non-resident student who lives outside Brownsville desires to transfer to BISD, an inter-district transfer application form is requested. These forms are available the entire instructional year and may be obtained at the Department of Pupil Services, 708 Palm Blvd. Room 121. The Texas Education Code does not allow a district the authority to revoke any transfer mid-year except for nonpayment of tuition.

## **TRANSFERS – OPEN ENROLLMENT (PK-5<sup>th</sup> grade)**

Open Enrollment for PK-5<sup>th</sup> grade application process allows parents to enroll their children at any BISD Elementary campus of their choice provided:

- 1) Space is available for additional students,
- 2) Parent will be responsible for providing their own transportation, and
- 3) Special Services Department approval based upon enrollment and program availability.

## **TRANSFERS – SUPPORT SERVICES FOR FOSTER CARE**

Students In Foster Care Educational Best Interests Factors: A student in foster care may remain at his or her school of origin unless the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) makes a determination that it is not in the child's best interest. "School of origin" is defined as the school that the student is attending at the time of the student's placement in foster care or of a change in placement. Based on the determination that it is in the student's best interest to remain in the school of origin, transportation may be provided. For more information, contact the Department of Pupil Services Administrator, Mr. Randy Park, at 708 Palm Blvd., Room 121, by calling (956) 698-3966 or by e-mail at [rampark@bisd.us](mailto:rampark@bisd.us).

## **TRUANCY**

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

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.

A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student meets any of the following:

#### **Notices to Parents - Warning of Absences**

- The student's parent will receive an attendance notice letter when a student is truant after he/she is absent 3 or more days or parts of days (cumulative) without proper excuse in the school year.
- The campus will notify a student's parent with a warning notice letter if the student is absent from school without excuses after three or more days (cumulative).
- After the 5<sup>th</sup> absence, a parent conference will be held to implement the Truancy Prevention Measures (Ed. Code 25.0915): Student Attendance Plan, counseling, attendance contract, and extended day program.
- Then, a court warning notice letter will be given to the student's parent after the student has been absent 10 or more days without excuses (cumulative) in the same school year.
- As per state law, (1), it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's attendance and require the student to attend school. (2) Failure to comply may subject parents to legal prosecution. (3) Parents are required to schedule a conference with school officials to discuss excessive absences **[See FEA Legal]**.

A court of law may impose penalties against a student's parent if a criminal complaint is filed after the student's tenth unexcused absence (Ed. Code 25.9051). If a student who is age 12 through age 18 violates the compulsory attendance law, the student could be charged with a civil offense **[See Policy FEA Legal]**.

## **TARDINESS**

According to the Texas Education Agency Student Attendance Accounting Handbook, "Tardies" do not exist. However, locally designed codes may be implemented, which indicate (1) a student arrived late to class before official roll call and was counted present for ADA and FSP purposes, or (2) a student arrived late to class after official roll call and was counted absent for ADA and FSP purposes. A teacher, principal, nurse, or counselor of the school in which a student is enrolled, may excuse the temporary absence of the student for any reason they deem acceptable with adequate documentation **[See Policy FEA LEGAL]**. **Tardiness does not equal an unexcused absence** as per **[op. Texas Attorney General, DM -2000 (1993)]**. Tardiness is a discipline matter that should be handled through the Campus Discipline Rules.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL**

State law requires all children between the ages of 6-18 years to be enrolled in school. In addition, once a child is enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten, he/she is required by state law to attend. This also applies to tutorials and/or extended year service programs (EYS), which a student is required to attend.

Minor students who are ages 6 through 18 may withdraw from school by presenting a request signed by the student's parent/guardian and stating the reason for the withdrawal, but the student must re-enroll in another public/private school within a 5 day period. Students who are 18 or older may request withdrawal without parent/guardian signature. The principal must be notified immediately when withdrawal procedures are initiated. A student who has applied for a transfer, or who anticipates moving to the residence of a person other than the parent or legal guardian **should not withdraw from school unless he/she has obtained a transfer approval.**

Students who are moving out of the District when schools are not in operation should contact the campus to withdraw from school. This ensures that a student is not counted as a "dropout."

#### **AIDING STUDENTS WHO HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR WHO NEED SPECIAL EDUCATION OR SECTION 504 SERVICES**

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools 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 and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) 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 if 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 an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 10 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

If the district or charter school 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 to evaluate the student. 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 a district or charter school 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 30th 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 or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost. Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school 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:

Contact Person: Administrator for Special Education Phone Number: 956-548-8400

#### **Section 504 Referrals**

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools 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:

### **Additional Information:**

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families.

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

## **ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS WHO HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR WHO NEED OR MAY NEED ASSISTANCE BY THE RTI TEAM, SECTION 504 OR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **How to get help for a student with medical, learning or behavior issues?**

If parents have concerns about your child's learning or behavior, the first step is to talk to your child's teacher or the school principal about your concerns. If this step is unsuccessful, the parent should ask the child's teacher, principal, or counselor about making a referral to the campus-based Response to Intervention (RtI) team, which is a team of teachers and other personnel who meet regularly to address any children with learning or behavioral concerns.

Before a child who is experiencing difficulty in the general education classroom is referred for a special education evaluation, the child should be considered for all support services available to all children. These services may include, but are not limited to tutoring, remedial services, compensatory services, response to scientific research-based intervention, and other academic or behavior support services.

### **Response to Intervention**

Federal law directs schools to focus on helping all children learn by addressing problems early. Response to Intervention (RtI) is the (three tier process) policy that all schools in BISD use for identifying and helping children who are at risk of not meeting academic success. The RtI process includes the following: the provision of scientific research-based instruction and interventions in the general education classroom, monitoring and measurements of the child's progress in response to the interventions, and use of these measures of progress to make educational decisions.

The RtI process includes a three tier system of interventions in which each tier represents an increasingly intense level of services. Interventions, which are provided to a child, will be continually adjusted based on progress monitoring until the child is progressing adequately. Children who do not respond to the initial interventions within a reasonable period of time as suggested by research are referred for more intensive interventions.

More information about the RtI process may be found at <http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=2147500224>.

### **Section 504**

Section 504 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based upon disability. Section 504 is an antidiscrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met.

Section 504 states that, *"No other qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in Section 706(8) of this title, shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance..."* [29 U.S.C. §794(a), 34 C.F.R. §104.4(a)].

### **Who is covered under Section 504?**

To be covered under Section 504, a student must be a school-aged student who (i) has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity; (ii) has a record of such an impairment; or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment." [34 C.F.R. §104.3(l)].

### **What is "impairment" as used under the Section 504 definition?**

The Section 504 regulatory provision at 34 C.F.R. §104.3(j)(2)(i) defines a physical or mental impairment as any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genitor-urinary hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The regulatory provision does not set forth an exhaustive list of specific diseases and conditions that may constitute physical or mental impairments because of the difficulty of ensuring the comprehensiveness of such a list. Impairment as used in Section 504 may include any disability, long-term illness, or various disorders that "substantially" reduces or limits a student's ability to access learning in the educational setting because of a disability related condition. *"It should be emphasized that a physical or mental Impairment does not constitute a disability for purposes of Section 504 unless its severity is such that it results in a substantial limitation of one or more major life activities."* [Appendix A to Part 104, #3]. Impairments under Section 504 do not include slow learners who do not also have a disability. The determination of whether a student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity must be made on the basis of an individual inquiry. Many students have impairments or disabilities that are not readily apparent to others. These

may include conditions such as specific learning disabilities, diabetes, epilepsy and allergies. Hidden disabilities, such as low vision, poor hearing, heart disease or chronic illness, may not be obvious, but if they substantially limit that child's ability to receive an appropriate education as defined by Section 504, they may be considered to have "impairment" under Section 504 standards. As a result, these students, regardless of their intelligence, will be unable to fully demonstrate their ability or attain educational benefits equal to that of non-disabled students [**The Civil Rights of Students with Hidden Disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Pamphlet**]. While the definition of a disabled person also includes specific limitations on what persons are classified as disabled under the regulations, it also specifies that only physical and mental impairments are included; thus, "*environmental, cultural and economic disadvantage are not in themselves covered*" [**Appendix A to Part 104, #3**].

#### **What are "major life activities"?**

Major life activities, as defined in the Section 504 Regulations at 34 C.F.R. §104.3(j)(2)(iii), include, but are not limited to: self-care, manual tasks, walking, seeing, speaking, sitting, thinking, learning, breathing, concentrating, interacting with others and working. As of January 1, 2009, with the reauthorization of the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act, this list has been expanded to also include the life activities of reading, concentrating, standing, lifting, bending, etc. This may include individuals with ADHD, dyslexia, cancer, diabetes, severe allergies, chronic asthma, Tourette's syndrome, digestive disorders, cardiovascular disorders, depression, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, HIV/AIDS, behavior disorders and temporary disabilities. Conditions, which are episodic or in remission, are also now covered *if* they create a substantial limitation in one or more major life activity when active.

#### **What does "substantially limits" mean?**

"*Substantially limits*" is not defined in the federal regulations. However, in a letter from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), they state, "*this is a determination to be made by each local school district and depends on the nature and severity of the person's disabling condition.*" Copyright © ERICC, 2013 8-2013

Any requests for Section 504 considerations should be made to the campus Section 504 Coordinator at the school, where the student attends and/or the Department of Section 504: (956) 548-8679.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

#### **Referral for Special Education - Full and Individual Evaluation**

If a child continues to experience difficulty in the general classroom after RtI process, school personnel may refer the child for a Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE) for special education services. A referral for an FIE for special education services may be initiated by the parent, school personnel, or by another person involved in the education or care of your child.

If the parent makes a written request to a local educational agency's director of special education services or to a district administrative employee for an initial evaluation for special education services, the school must, not later than the 10<sup>th</sup> school day after the date the school receives the request, either give the parent: 1) prior written notice of its proposal to conduct an evaluation, a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards, and the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation, or 2) prior written notice of its refusal to evaluate the child and a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards.

#### **Initial Evaluation**

If the parent gives consent for an initial evaluation, the school will conduct an evaluation of the child in all areas of suspected disability to determine if the child has a disability and to determine his or her educational needs. The evaluation process for the child must:

- include information about the child's academic, developmental and functional performance,
- be administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel,
- be administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication, and
- be unbiased, or given in such a way so as not to discriminate against the child, regardless of his or her cultural background, race or disability.

The initial evaluation and the resulting report must be completed no later than 45 school days from the day the school receives the parent's written consent for evaluation, except that if the child has been absent from school during the evaluation period on three or more school days; then, the evaluation period must be extended by a number of school days equal to the number of school days that the child has been absent. The school must provide the parent with a copy of the evaluation at no cost.

#### **Eligibility**

The ARD committee must meet and make the eligibility determination. There is a two-part test for determining whether a child is eligible for special education and related services: 1) the child must have a disability, and 2) as a result of the disability, the child must need special education and related services to benefit from education. To meet the first part of the two-part test for eligibility, a child between the ages of 3 through 21, except as noted, must meet the criteria for one or more of the disability categories listed below:

- Auditory impairment (AI) (from birth);
- Autism;
- Deaf-blindness (from birth);
- Emotional disturbance;
- Intellectual Disability;
- Multiple disabilities;
- Non- categorical early childhood (ages 3 – 5);
- Orthopedic impairment;
- Other health impairment;
- Specific learning disability;
- Speech or language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury; or
- Visual impairment (VI) (including blindness from birth)

Not all struggling learners are eligible for special education services. If the child’s academic problems are primarily from a lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math or due to the fact that the child has limited English proficiency, the child is not eligible for special education services. If the evaluation reflects that the child does not have a disability, the campus RtI team may meet and recommend other services or programs in general education to help the child.

If the evaluation shows that the child has a disability, the ARD committee must, then, address the second part of the two-part eligibility test by deciding whether the child needs special education and related services to benefit from education. If the child does not have an educational need for special education services, he or she is not eligible for any such services.

If the child qualifies for special education services, the school is required to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). This is accomplished through the ARD committee’s development of an Individual Education Program (IEP) and the school’s implementation of the IEP. Before the school can provide any initial special education and related services, it must obtain parental consent for services. If the parent does not give consent to the initial provision of services, the school may not ask for mediation or request a due process hearing to override the parent’s refusal to consent to services. No special education and related services will be provided if the parent refuses to provide written consent.

The preceding are excerpts from *Parent’s Guide to the Admission, Review and Dismissal Process April 2016*. A full version can be found at <http://bisdspediatricservices.wixsite.com/ss01>.

## CAMPUS LIFE

### ATHLETICS

Athletics are an integral part of the District’s curriculum, and participation in a variety of team and individual sports is part of the education of students in the District. High school athletics are operated in accordance with rules established by the University Interscholastic League in addition to extracurricular guidelines established by the State Board of Education and the District. Middle school athletics also adhere to these applicable guidelines and rules and regulations established by the District. A copy of the UIL constitution and contest rules are available for review at the BISD Athletics department, BISD Fine Arts Department or at the UIL website: [www.uil-texas.org/athletics](http://www.uil-texas.org/athletics). Please contact the respective campus principal or the appropriate department for contest eligibility.

#### **Athletics Sportsmanship**

Each student should follow these suggestions that will serve as a guide in carrying out his/her responsibility for promoting good sportsmanship:

1. Regard the visiting team and fans as well as officials as guests of the District and treat them as such.
2. Respect the rights of all spectators.
3. Accept the officials’ decision as final.
4. Support your cheerleaders with enthusiasm.
5. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
6. Consider it a privilege and duty to encourage everyone to live up to the spirit of the rules of fair play and sportsmanship.
7. Support other schools in the Brownsville Independent School District as they play other visiting teams.

Students should refrain from the following unsportsmanlike conduct:

1. Do not boo or jeer officials or players at any time.
2. Do not applaud errors by opponents or penalties inflicted upon them.
3. Do not use profane language at any time before, during, or after the game.
4. Do not throw objects on the field, on the playing court, or in the stands.
5. Do not criticize players or coaches for losing a game.
6. At no time during the contest should a fan enter the playing field/court.

Students must always remember that the University Interscholastic League may expel or suspend a school from participating in all sports if the students, ex-students, or patrons misbehave before, during, or after the contest. Students must also remember that a gatekeeper, policeman, District security official, school official, or contest official may have an individual removed for behavior that is disruptive to the playing of the game, or disruptive to the fans, players or officials. Intoxication or possessing alcoholic beverages during a University Interscholastic League contest is strictly prohibited. The possession, consumption or the intoxication by a fan during a UIL contest can cause the host school to forfeit the game. Important notice to parents and students: Participation in athletics and admittance to a sporting event is a privilege and not a right, which may be concluded by District administration or officials.

Note: For additional information, please refer to the UIL Constitution and Rules Manual for academic and eligibility requirements (No Pass, No Play).

### **BACKPACKS**

In the best interest of student safety, only clear, transparent, or mesh backpacks, waist packs, or purse packs shall be permitted in Grades 6-12. Students who fail to comply will be subject to disciplinary consequences. First offense, student warning and parent contact; second offense, pick up backpack/waist pack/purse pack and return to parent during conference; third offense, contact parent and assign student to an alternative setting at the discretion of the principal. The only exception to this rule is the use of a school-issued athletic bag that can only be used before or after school, and as per extenuating circumstances involving IDEA and 504 students, which are approved by the principal. Campus principals may opt not to allow students to use backpacks/waist packs/purse packs and may instead recommend a trapper keeper.

### **BICYCLES**

Students who ride bicycles to school must obey state laws for their safety and should ride with the traffic, ride in single file, ride with only one person per bicycle, and use arm signals before turning. Bicycles must be walked on the school grounds during school hours. For security reasons, students are encouraged to lock and chain their bicycles to the appropriate racks provided by the District. The District or school is not responsible for loss or damage to bicycles.

### **BULLYING**

BISD is a bully free zone. Bullying of any type will not be tolerated. Bullying should always be reported to a counselor or administration. If bullying does occur and includes a student with special needs, the campus must conduct an investigation, and should convene an ARD meeting to determine if any compensatory services are owed to the student as part of FAPE.

### **CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, which may be accessed at the Brownsville Independent School District Improvement Plan. 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. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender or sexually suggestive behavior. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

A child who has experienced sexual abuse should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that disclosures of sexual abuse may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse, 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.

As a parent, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse, the campus 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 (TDFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs.

### **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES**

Teachers will determine specific procedures to use in their classrooms. The following guidelines are also appropriate:

1. It is the student's responsibility to attend classes with the proper materials. Students should not be allowed to return to their lockers or homerooms for forgotten supplies.
2. Students will abide by the rules established by each teacher.
3. If a student is having problems with a particular class, the student should discuss the matter first with the teacher involved. An appointment should be made, so the discussion can be in private.
4. Students are not allowed to leave the classroom without the teacher's permission.
5. Bells are only a signal to teachers that class is done. Students must remain in class until dismissed. An orderly exit is expected at all times.

6. Students and/or situations considered major discipline problems by the teacher may be referred to the principal or the assistant principal.
7. Teachers may use appropriate discipline management techniques consistent with Board policies.

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Parents of students with a communicable or contagious disease are asked **to inform the school nurse** or principal, so appropriate infection control measures can be implemented. Confidentiality will be maintained concerning information or knowledge about all students, except where required by law. Students with symptoms of a communicable disease, illness, or condition are not allowed to attend school as long as their disease or illness is contagious.

### **CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES**

**Informal Process** – The Board of Trustees encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate teacher, principal, or other campus administrator.

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level. Thereafter, the respective Area Assistant Superintendents for each campus are available to assist parents and students whose issue was not resolved at the teacher/principal level.

**Formal Process** – If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the student or parent, the student or parent may initiate the formal process by filing the Brownsville Independent School District written complaint form within the stipulated time allotment.

The District has adopted a standard complaint policy **FNG [Local]** and **FNG [EXHIBIT]** for those complaints and concerns, which cannot be resolved through the informal process. There are specific procedures and timelines to be followed. A copy of these policies and forms may be obtained from the Principal's or Superintendent's office.

A student and/or parent/legal guardian must first seek resolution to the complaint by discussing it informally with the teacher, a counselor, or assistant principal, and/or finally the principal prior to invoking formal grievance procedures. If all the informal levels have been exhausted, and the complaint has not been resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student and/or parent/legal guardian must petition the Superintendent or designee in writing to hear the complaint.

### **DAMAGES TO SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Any deliberate damage to school property by students is not tolerated. The parents of students causing damages will be responsible for the cost of the repairs.

### **DRESS CODE FOR BISD SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Policy FNCA [Local]** of the Brownsville Independent School District provides general guidelines and a listing of appropriate dress and grooming for students on BISD campuses and at school-sponsored events. Violations of the dress code can have disciplinary consequences ranging from in-school suspension for a single violation to more serious disciplinary action for repeated violations. This list is not exclusive, but it is adopted to address specific issues, which have been determined by the administrators to be disruptive to the instructional environment, and to provide guidance as to the type of dress and/or grooming, which will be considered to be a violation of the BISD Student Dress Code.

### **DRESS, GROOMING, AND ACCESSORIES**

Parents and students are expected to use good judgment in selecting appropriate clothing for students to wear at school. Each student shall wear clothing that is neat, appropriate, fitting, and not so revealing as to cause a distraction. Girls' apparel must not be above the knee to the point of being a distraction. Muscle shirts, see-through shirts or blouses, bare midriffs, strapless and/or backless outfits, and beachwear are prohibited. Clothing displaying obscenities, suggestive slogans, nudity, and crime/violence, drugs, beer, or alcohol designs also is prohibited. State law requires shoes to be worn at all times. No article of clothing or other accessories shall be worn in such a way as to advertise, promote, or be associated with gang activities. Other specific criteria and guidelines regarding student attire are shared with parents on the first day of school. Schools may develop additional and more specific dress code guidelines with the approval of the respective Area Assistant Superintendent.

**NOTE:** Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, all elementary and middle schools implemented a standardized attire requirement as designated by the respective campus administration. All elementary campus dress codes will include a white polo style (collar) shirt, which may also include the BISD official logo.

1. Dresses, shorts, and skirts shall not be so short as to cause a distraction. Anything shorter than the end of the student's fingertips when the student arms are held extended to his/her sides shall be conclusively deemed to be too short. Longer lengths may be determined by the administrator to be inappropriate in individual cases. Dresses or skirts with slits above the level permitted for shorts and skirts shall not be permitted.
2. **No** baggy pants or shorts are allowed. All pants must be worn with the top around the wearer's waist and must be covering undergarments. The waist size of pants must be an appropriate size for the wearer. No oversized or baggy clothing is allowed. No exposed undergarments are allowed.
3. **No** tight or transparent clothing are allowed.
4. **No** torn jeans or other garments are allowed.
5. **No** sleeveless shirts, which expose undergarments, are allowed

6. **No** tank tops, halter tops, bare midriffs or chest, see-through outfits, backless, spaghetti straps, strapless, or beachwear are allowed.
7. **No** low-cut shirts or blouses are allowed.
8. Shirts which extend below the rear pocket are to be worn inside the waist of pants or skirts; trench coats are not permitted.
9. State law requires that appropriate shoes be worn at all times. Thongs, shoes without heel straps and steel-toed boots/shoes are inappropriate. **No** shoes with metal taps or noisemakers are allowed.
10. No hairnets, bandanas, or similar scarves may be worn on the head.
11. Sunglasses will not be worn inside the school building other than prescription dark glasses.
12. Articles of clothing which display gang symbols, obscenities, suggestive slogans, nudity, crime, violence, death imagery, drugs, alcohol, or which promote the use of tobacco are prohibited.
13. No article of clothing or other accessories shall be worn in a way determined by the campus administrator to advertise, promote, or be associated with gang activities. Upon the campus administration in determining that a particular style of dress or accessory should be prohibited under this section, the student body on that campus shall be so advised, and thereafter, anyone participating in such activity shall be in violation of this code.
14. All students are prohibited from wearing clothing or grooming that, in the administrator's judgment, may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operations.
15. Jewelry and accessories shall not be excessive or distracting, and shall not be worn in such a way as to promote violence, crime, gang activity, or drug, alcohol, or tobacco use. The following items are specifically prohibited, and shall not be worn or brought onto school property: metal chains, pet collars, and religious symbols which have been altered with the intent of causing offense or inciting or promoting gang activity, violence, or other prohibited behaviors.
16. On days specified by principals, designated attire will be treated as appropriate dress notwithstanding anything to the contrary elsewhere in this code.

#### **GROOMING**

1. Hair and facial hair will be properly groomed. Distracting hairstyles and/or hair colors, as determined by the campus administration on a case-by-case basis, will not be permitted. Examples of the type of hairstyles, which have been determined by the administration to be unacceptable, are Mohawks, spiked hair, and the like.
2. If makeup is used, it must be discreet. Makeup shall not be worn in such a way as to be distracting as determined by the campus administration.
3. No exposed tattoos that display gang symbols, obscenities, suggestive slogans, nudity, crime, violence, death imagery, drugs, alcohol, or which promote the use of tobacco are allowed. No body piercing will be permitted, other than pierced earrings of a reasonable size and number **[Revised 9-16-15]**.

As stated previously, this list is not exclusive. Campus administration may at any time make reasonable determination that an item of clothing, style or manner of dress or grooming, or accessory poses an unacceptable risk of disruption to the instructional environment because it is inappropriately distracting, is intended or likely to cause offense or incite conflict among the campus population, is unacceptably conducive to the concealment of weapons or other contraband, or on any other reasonable grounds. In that case, the campus administration shall be entitled to use the provisions of this code and the **BISD Policy FNCA [Local]** to address the matter.

#### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

A student shall be ineligible from participation in any extracurricular activity sponsored by the District or the University Interscholastic League during the 1st three weeks after the grade reporting period in which the student received a grade lower than the equivalent of 70 on a scale of 100 in any academic class other than an identified honors or advanced class. After a six-week grade reporting period or after the 1st six weeks of a semester or grade reporting period, a student who receives a grade below 70 is ineligible from participation in extracurricular activities for three weeks, and for three-week intervals thereafter if all grades are not above 70. **[Exception: The 1st six-weeks eligibility is based upon the number of credits earned.]** An ineligible student may practice or rehearse with other students for an extracurricular activity but may not participate in a competition or other public performance. For the 1st six weeks of the school year, a student in Grades 7-9 is eligible for participation if the student was promoted from the previous grade level prior to the beginning of the first six weeks. Students in secondary schools may not be permitted to be absent from class in any full-year course more than 10 times during the school year or more than five times during a semester for single-semester course to participate in extracurricular or other school-related activities (excluding play-offs).

Note: For additional information, please refer to the UIL Constitution and Rules Manual for academic and eligibility requirements (No Pass, No Play).

UIL Section 401: Eligibility–Academics: students are not allowed to change schools for the purpose of participating in a UIL academic contest.

UIL Section 402: Eligibility-Music: students are not allowed to change schools for the purpose of participating in a UIL music contest.

UIL Section 403: Eligibility-Athletics: students are not allowed to change schools for athletic purposes.

### **FACILITIES/ASBESTOS**

Current Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules require that local education agencies conduct inspections of all school facilities under their administrative control for friable and non-friable asbestos-containing building materials and develop asbestos management plans for each campus.

Friable asbestos-containing building materials refer to materials that can be pulverized by applying hand-pressure. The EPA also requires that local education agencies notify parent-teacher associations and employee organizations of the availability of management plans for their inspection at each school.

Management plans contain inspection results and describe the methods that will be used to prevent asbestos hazards to building occupants. They are available for inspection by the public, including parents, guardians, teachers, and others within five days of a request for such an inspection at each school campus. Individuals may contact the school principal to request inspection of a school's management plan. Individual copies may be purchased.

### **FIRE DRILLS**

The Texas Fire Marshall requires that educational occupancies conduct a minimum of 9 fire drills, one per month of each month having 10 or more school days. Fire drills are held regularly to develop safety practices, which will help students to move quickly and orderly to assigned safety areas during an emergency. Student cooperation is expected and required.

### **FUND RAISING/SOLICITATIONS (PTO, PTA, BOOSTER CLUBS)**

Students, student clubs, classes, schools, organizations, and parent groups will be permitted to conduct fund-raising activities provided that all funds are used for students on campus. Permission of the principal and appropriate administrator, i.e. Superintendent, Area Assistant Superintendent or other designee, must be obtained before students can post, distribute, and/or sell any items on school property. All fund-raisers will be conducted under the supervision of the project sponsor. Students are prohibited from participating in any fund-raising activity that disrupts their instructional program.

As necessary, a health permit must be obtained, and all Department of Health requirements must be met.

Fund-raising by outside groups, i.e. PTO, PTA, booster clubs, etc., are not allowed unless approved by the campus principal. These outside groups are nonprofit organizations, not tax exempt, and must obtain their tax identification number. Use of the Brownsville Independent School District tax identification number is **prohibited**.

As necessary, a health permit must be obtained, and all Department of Health requirements must be met.

Schools cannot sponsor games of chance. PTO, PTA, etc. may conduct a raffle to benefit the District or campus if the outside group meets the criteria for a "qualified nonprofit organization" and complies with the **Board Policy GKB [Legal]**.

### **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING**

Students and parents are encouraged to see the school counselor to help them understand, contribute and support a quality guidance and counseling program in order to effectively guide their children's development. The primary responsibility of the school counselor is to counsel students to fully develop each student's academic, career, personal, and social abilities. Through a comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program, the counselor shall provide or address the following student services:

- at risk counseling, becoming substance abusers, participating in gang activity, or having suicidal ideations, or in need of modified instructional strategies,
- consult with a student's parent or guardian and make referrals as appropriate in consultation with the student's parent or guardian,
- consult with school staff, parents, and other community members to help them increase the effectiveness of student education and promote student success,
- coordinate people and resources in the school, home, and community,
- with the assistance of school staff, interpret standardized test results and other assessment data that help a student make educational and career plans,
- deliver classroom guidance activities or serve as a consultant to teachers conducting lessons based on the school's guidance curriculum, and
- deliver guidance and counseling services as required by local and state guidelines and policies.
- provide information to students and parents on post- secondary education, graduation plans including performance acknowledgements and endorsements, resources to apply for federal financial aid, automatic admission, Texas Grant, college and dual credit programs, and the availability of education and training vouchers and tuition and fee waivers to attend an institution of higher education as provided for a student who is or was previously in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

- provide other information as outlined in TEC Chapter 33 for students and parents pertaining to a implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program.

Texas House Bill 1942 was passed to address how schools must make their campuses safer for all students, specifically regarding the issues of bullying and cyberbullying [**Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for definitions in the GLOSSARY**]. Counseling services for victims, witnesses and bullies must be provided after an investigation has been conducted, and verification of an incident has been confirmed. Other protective measures provided by this law will be in place.

### **HEALTH CARE APPOINTMENTS**

Whenever possible, doctor appointments should be scheduled outside the school day. However, the student who has a documented appointment with a health care professional during school hours may be excused and shall be counted as having attended for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance in the district, provided the following conditions are in place:

1. commences classes or returns to school on the same day of the appointment;
2. brings back a note from the health professional, and
3. makes up work within a reasonable time.

According to **HB 192/TEC 25.087**, students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder must be excused on a day when they have an appointment for any generally recognized service for persons with ASD. This includes behavior analysis, speech therapy and occupational therapy. Service must be provided by a health care practitioner. Only district staff and district contracted services staff personnel are allowed to provide services to students at or on any district properties.

### **HEALTH SCREENINGS**

Vision, hearing, and spinal screening are mandated by the Texas Legislature for students in specific grades and ages. School nurses or certified screeners will conduct student screenings throughout the school year. Parents may choose to have the screenings done by a physician and provide written results of the screening by August 31 of each school year to the school nurse.

Parents will be notified if the screening results warrant further evaluation. Screenings are not intended to replace regular health care and checkups by a physician or health provider. Parents who object to spinal screenings for religious reasons must submit an affidavit to the principal on or before the day of admission stating the objections to screening. Schools are required to have screening documentation on record to comply with the mandate.

Acanthosis Nigrican Screening (a skin condition that signals high insulin levels in the body) is required for grades 3, 5 and 7. Acanthosis Nigricans is important because these markings can help identify students who run the risk of developing diabetes in the future. In addition, **Senate Bill 31** requires the **Texas Education Agency** in collaboration with the **Texas Department of Health** to provide information regarding bacterial meningitis and its vaccine to students and parents each year. For further information on vaccines and health screenings, please contact Health Services at (956) 548-8191 or view the BISD Website.

### **HEALTH SERVICES**

In case of injuries or illnesses during the school day, the school nurse is available as scheduled or on call to help. Students should request a pass from their teacher before going to the nurse's office. The judgment of the nurse or the principal, sometimes with parent's help, will determine whether a student should remain in school or be sent home.

All students are issued an Emergency Health Card to complete and have on file in the school nurse's office. Parents must note any special health concerns of the student on the emergency card and **should immediately notify the school of any change in telephone numbers, or the adults listed as well as changes of home address.**

Emergency procedures will be followed according to District guidelines, and reasonable attempts will be made by school officials to contact the parents when an emergency arises.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

State-adopted instructional materials are provided free of charge and should be used responsibly. According to state law, students are responsible for all textbooks issued to them. Textbooks must be appropriately covered by the student under the direction of the teacher and must be returned to the teacher at the close of the session or when the student withdraws from school. A student who is issued a damaged book should report that fact immediately to the teacher. Students and their parents/guardians shall be responsible for all books not returned, by the student. Any student failing to return all books shall forfeit the right to free textbooks until the books previously issued but not returned are paid for by the parent/guardian.

When books are collected at the end of the semester or year, they should reflect normal use. If they are in any other condition, the student will be fined accordingly. A clear textbook record is required for new textbooks to be issued.

Campuses have the option to issue classroom sets. In this case, if a parent desires to have books issued to his/her child, then a written request needs to be made to the campus administrator. Students are responsible for all library books issued to them. Library books must be returned on time; otherwise, a fine will/may be issued.

Supplemental reading materials to be distributed to students by teachers must be approved by principals. This includes videos, books, pamphlets, e-books, etc. Materials found in school libraries and purchased through District funding sources have prior approval of the principal by virtue of his/her signature on the purchase order.

Supplemental materials for classroom use, such as videos, require, per **Board Policy EFA [Local]**, for campus Administrators to ensure the materials “enrich and support the curriculum” and meet the “appropriate level for age, ability level, learning styles, and social and emotional development of the student for whom they are selected.” Campus Administrators will use BISD Form 871-001 to inform Parents when videos rated PG - Parental Guidance Suggested or PG-13 - Parents Strongly Cautioned, Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children under 13 by the Motion Picture Association of America will be used during instruction. Parents must review the justification for their use and provide consent for his/her child to view the material by signing and returning the form to the school, or an alternate assignment will be assigned to their child. **[Video Form is found on BISD Website under Library/Media Services.]**

#### **INSURANCE**

At the beginning of the school year, a voluntary student accident insurance program is made available to students through the individual schools. The purpose is to provide parents an insurance option for injuries that may occur during the school year. Parents who elect to insure their children must complete the enrollment application and return the application to their children’s respective campus. **The District shall not be responsible for costs of treating injuries or assume liability for any costs associated with an injury.**

#### **LASER POINTERS**

The use of or possession of laser pointers is not permitted on school grounds, school sponsored activities, or school buses. If a student is found in possession or use of a laser pointer, the pointer will be confiscated, and the Student Code of Conduct discipline measures will be implemented.

#### **LIABILITY**

A parent or other person who is assigned the duty of control and reasonable discipline of a child is liable for any property damage proximately caused by:

1. The negligent conduct of the child if the conduct is reasonably attributable to the negligent failure of the parent or other person to exercise that duty, or
2. The willful and malicious conduct of a child who is at least 10 years of age but under the age of 18 **[Family Code 41.001].**

If a child who is age 10 through 16 engages in conduct which results in damage to District property, the District may institute formal charges for the purpose of having the juvenile court order the child, or parent to make full or partial restitution to the District in accordance with law **[Family code 51.02, 54.041].**

#### **LOCKERS**

Neither the school nor the District takes responsibility for loss or damage to any personal property placed in lockers. School officials have the right to inspect the contents of student lockers and remove anything contrary to school rules or detrimental to the welfare of the school. Students should only use the lockers assigned to them.

#### **LUNCH HOUR/MEALS**

Students shall remain on campus during the school day, except when given specific permission to leave by the principal or his/her designee. Elementary and middle school students will remain on campus during the lunch time. High school students will remain on campus during the lunch hour, where adequate facilities have been provided by the school district. Free meals are available to all students on a daily basis. Students may bring their lunch to school if they desire. Students who abuse off-campus lunch privileges are subject to disciplinary action.

#### **FACE MASKS/FACE SHIELDS**

Given the widespread community transmission of COVID-19, The Brownsville Independent School District remains committed to providing high-quality education in a safe environment for students and staff. To this end, employees, visitors, and students will be required to wear a face mask/face shield while on school premises.

- Pre-K – 2<sup>ND</sup> grade students will be required to wear a face shield.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students will be required to wear a face mask.

#### **MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

As a courtesy to written parental requests, authorized District staff members may administer prescription or nonprescription medication according to the guidelines established herein and in Board policy. Neither the District nor its officials assume any responsibility for this service. As per Board Policy, a written permission form from the attending physician is also required. **A student who must take a prescription or nonprescription medicine during the school day must bring a written request and the medicine in its properly labeled bottle to the nurse’s office. Medication from other countries cannot be given by District personnel.** The written request from the parent, guardian, or other person having legal control of the student should state the student’s name, dosage, and time(s) of administration. **[Form is found on the BISD Website under Health Services- Medication Permit form 14-148].** Nonprescription medicine must be presented in its original container with

the student's name affixed to the container. The medicine will be administered at the proper time(s) for a maximum of 15 days without doctor's order.

#### **MEDICATION POLICY**

1. Only medications from the United States will be administered at school.
2. Medication must be in its properly labeled, original container.
3. Medication permit must be completed and signed by parent or legal guardian. No verbal consent or phone consent will be accepted.
4. Medication will be kept in a secure place in the nurse's office during school hours. No medication shall be kept in the classrooms at any time.
5. It is the responsibility of the parent or designated adult to deliver the medication to the school nurse and have the medication picked up and taken home after school hours. Medication will not be delivered to the home address by the school nurse.
6. The physician's signature will be required for any prescribed medication and for any over the counter medication, which will be kept in the nurse's office for longer than 15 days.

#### **OBTAINING INFORMATION AND PROTECTING STUDENTS' RIGHTS**

Your child 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.
- Sexual 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 parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation **[For further information, See Policy EF]**.

#### **"OPTING OUT" OF SURVEYS AND ACTIVITIES**

- As a parent, you also have a right to receive notice and "opt" your child out of participating in: any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any non-emergency, 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 scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law **[See Policies EF and FFAA]**.

#### **PARENTAL RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND INVOLVEMENT (Working Together)**

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

- Encouraging your child to place 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. Ensure that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects. Be sure your child comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the District. Discuss with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child. If your child is entering the ninth grade, review the requirements of the graduation programs with your child. Monitor your child's academic progress and contact teachers as needed.
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office for an appointment. The teacher will return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school.
- Becoming a school volunteer.
- Participating in campus parent organizations such as PTA, PTO, Boosters Club, etc.
- Offering to serve 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.

**As a parent, you also have a right:**

- To request information regarding the professional qualifications of your 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, whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived, and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional, who may provide services to your child.
- To review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum and to examine tests administered to your child.
- To inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school. BISD asks parents and guardians to encourage their children to place a high priority on their education and to commit themselves to making the most of the educational opportunities the schools provide. Therefore, each year a specific date is designated as Parental Involvement Week in the Brownsville Independent School District. Parental involvement can include staying informed about school activities and issues, becoming a school volunteer, participating in campus organizations for parents, and monitoring student progress. All parents are urged to schedule parent-teacher conferences during the school year. Parents are especially encouraged to attend their respective campus parent meetings and Fall/Spring Open House. Parents, who have questions or concerns about classroom activities, teacher expectations, or the subjects or courses their children are taking, particularly lessons or activities in which they are involved, should first contact the classroom teacher and the campus principal. Questions or concerns about campus activities should be brought immediately to the attention of the principal. Matters, which cannot be resolved at the campus level, may be brought to the attention of other appropriate administrators, following the appropriate chain of command.

#### **PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS**

The District recognizes Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA), Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTO), and Parent-Teacher Student Associations (PTSA) as valuable organizations that encourage parent and student involvement and support District, student, and campus activities. Membership is voluntary, and open to all interested persons. Meeting schedules are set by the individual campus. Campuses are responsible for notifying all parents as to meeting days, places, and times.

#### **PESTICIDES**

Pesticides are applied periodically at each campus. Parents who have questions should contact the Office of Maintenance/Facilities and speak with the person in charge of the District’s pesticide programs.

#### **PERSONAL ITEMS**

BISD schools are not responsible for the loss, damage, or theft of personal belongings that are brought to campus. Personal items may include the following but are not limited to: compact disc (CD) players, MP players, toys, computer games, and expensive jewelry.

#### **PETS AND SERVICE ANIMALS**

Permission from the principal must be obtained before students can bring a pet or animal on campus. If it is allowed, the pet or animal is only to be handled by its owner. All others must only observe.

Individuals with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by their service animals in all areas of the District’s facilities, where members of the public, participants in services, programs or activities, or invitees, as relevant, are allowed to go **[28C.F.R.35.136(g)]**.

“Service Animal” means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability.

The district may ask an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from the premises if:

1. The animal is out of control, and the animal’s handler does not take effective action to control it, or
2. The animal is not housebroken **[28C.F.R.35.136(b)]**.

For more information on service animals, please **See Board Policy FBA [LEGAL]**.

#### **PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE**

Texas law requires students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and to the Texas flag each day. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. A minute of silence will follow the recitation of the pledges. The student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity, so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others **[See Policy EC]**.

#### **SOCIAL EVENTS**

Any social event sponsored by a school, a student organization, or a class must have the approval of the principal.

#### **STUDENT ACTIVITY OR I.D. CARDS**

All high school students are issued Student Activity Cards upon initial enrollment each year. The cards are subject to the following provisions:

1. The card is the official STUDENT ACTIVITY CARD and must be carried by student at all times on campus and at school functions.
2. Failure to present the card upon request by any authorized representative of the school is a breach of regulations and subject to disciplinary action.
3. Students should report the loss of the card immediately to the campus main office.
4. Students must present the card to vote in any school election and to borrow books from the library. The card maybe used for admission to athletic and social activities.
5. The card must be returned if a student withdraws before graduation.
6. All secondary students must present a picture ID in order to test state and federal tests (TSIA, AP, STAAR, EOC, and so on). A campus Student Activity Card that contains the student picture, name, and ID# will suffice as an acceptable ID for testing within BISD.
7. A replacement fee is charged for a lost card. Schools may also issue photo-identification cards (or badges) to their students and staff.

### **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

Student organizations allow students to extend and reinforce their classroom learning, offer opportunities to practice democratic self-government, enable them to develop leadership abilities, and honor outstanding student achievements. Information about campus/student organizations can be obtained from the school principal. Eligibility criteria and the rules of conduct may be included in the organization's constitution, which is approved by the campus principal.

### **STUDENT RELEASE**

Parents are required to complete and submit a Student Release Form to the campus their child attends. The form must list and include names of parents/guardians and individuals that are authorized to pick up the student. The Brownsville Independent School District reserves the right to require picture identification.

### **TRAVELING TO/ FROM SCHOOL**

Students should be cautious about safety hazards as they travel to and from school. They are encouraged to go directly to school in the morning and home in the afternoon. Students should use designated, marked crosswalks and other safety precautions. Crossing a street between intersections or crossing at an intersection against the signal of the pedestrian crossing light, also known as jaywalking, is both dangerous and a traffic misdemeanor subject to a fine as per **Texas Transportation Code- Section 552.005**. It may also be cited as contributory negligence if the pedestrian is injured by a vehicle while jaywalking. Students should stay on campus after they arrive at school until the end of the school day. Parents shall not leave vehicles running while leaving or picking up children. Parents shall not leave children so early that they will not be adequately supervised. Parents/adults shall not leave children unattended inside motorized vehicles.

### **VIDEO VIEWING - PARENTAL PERMISSION**

A video requiring parental consent that will be viewed as part of the student's instructional program needs a signed parent consent form to be returned to the campus prior to its showing. The form is available on the BISD Website under Library/Media Services (#871-001).

### **VIDEOTAPING AT ATHLETIC EVENTS**

Video recording at BISD campus athletic events is prohibited without the consent of the campus administration. Should you have any questions, please contact the campus principal. Video recording at Sam's Memorial Stadium is prohibited without the consent of the stadium administration. Should you have any questions, please contact the office of the BISD Athletic Director. Videotaping/Filming/Recording by Individuals and Organizations is strictly prohibited except for persons or organizations acting under subsections (1)(A)(i) and (ii) of UIL Constitution and Contest Rules; no person or organization shall film, videotape, or otherwise make a visual recording of any athletic event or activity without prior written consent of the schools that are competing in the event. Any filming, videotaping or other recording of an athletic contest may not obstruct the view of other spectators of the contest.

### **VISITORS**

Parents and other visitors are always welcome in District schools. **As a safety precaution and to avoid classroom interruptions, classroom visits will need to be approved by campus administration. Visitors must stop by the principal's office upon their arrival to secure clearance. All visitors are required to sign in and out. Volunteers will be restricted from testing areas during state and federal tests.** Students may not bring a guest to school. News media access to classrooms or students must be approved by the principal. If parents need to discuss their child's academic progress with the teacher, they must schedule an appointment during the teacher's assigned conference period or before or after school. Parents may leave items, such as homework assignments, jackets and other necessary class supplies, with the office staff in order to avoid interrupting instruction.

## WEATHER EMERGENCIES

Rarely is it necessary for the Superintendent to close school because of inclement weather conditions. However, should weather conditions be such that parents suspect that schools might be closed, they should listen to local radio and television stations for official announcements by the District. The District will make reasonable efforts to provide advisories over the BISD Instructional Channel (17) and other public broadcasting systems. In case of local flooding due to torrential rains, lightning, or high winds, students will not be dismissed from school until the principal determines it is safe for students to go home. Students may leave school if a parent or legal guardian personally arrives at the campus to pick them up.

## CURRICULUM

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

A student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade penalties on assignments or tests and disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. A student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty during state/federal testing shall be subject to having his/her test invalidated and/or disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and local/state/federal policies. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination. The penalty for cheating will be a zero for work involved, and the student will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgement of the classroom teacher or another supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students.

### ALTERNATIVE CAMPUS (BLA)

The BISD Brownsville Learning Academy (BLA) is a non-traditional secondary educational program that offers academic options for students who want to complete the necessary requirements for obtaining a high school diploma. BLA is a competency-based learning system with flexible scheduling for young adults who are not successfully completing traditional high school program.

### AWARDING OF CREDIT FOR OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENTS

- A. Credit will be awarded in accordance with the BISD and State of Texas graduation requirements, Texas Education Code, and PEIMS listings to any student transferring into the Brownsville Independent School District from a Regionally Accredited School (i.e. Southern Association Accreditation), International Baccalaureate Program, or a public/private United States accredited school system.
- B. Credit for concurrent enrollment and/or dual enrollment approved by the high school principal prior to course enrollment will be awarded based on the Texas Education Code guidelines, the High School Course Listing Guide approved annually by the Board of Trustees, the Community College General Academic Course Guidelines Manual, and Concurrent Enrollment or Tech-Prep Agreements with state approved universities or colleges.
- C. All other students (out-of-country, home school, and non-accredited private school) will be required to take:
  1. Credit-by-exam test; or
  2. Credit-for-acceleration tests for all courses for which credit is required prior to the awarding of credit. Details regarding credit-by-exam and credit-for acceleration can be found in the High School Course Listing Guide approved annually by the Board of Trustees.
- D. Foreign exchange students are eligible to receive a State of Texas diploma, but the student shall complete all high school requirements under **19 TAC 74.11 or 74.41**, as applicable, to satisfy state and local graduation requirements.
- E. Foreign exchange students enrolled in BISD schools will comply with BISD procedures for awarding of credit to out-of-district students.
- F. Brownsville Independent School District allows credits for meeting the State's graduation requirement through correspondence courses. The State of Texas recognizes correspondence courses only from the **University of Texas at Austin, Texas Tech Correspondence Student Program, or the Extension Division of Texas Tech University** unless the correspondence courses were already listed on incoming students' transcripts.
- G. In accordance with the Texas Education Agency requirements for Award Credits (TAC §§7.102, 25.007, and 28.023.\_§74.26), the Brownsville Independent School District has two different methods for **out-of-country** credit validation:
  - i. BISD has implemented the **Course/Credit Validation Analysis (CVA)** procedure, which will allow the district to ensure and expedite the process to evaluate academic records or transcripts for **out-of-country** students. Such procedure entails the following:
    1. Each BISD high school Counseling Department in collaboration with the Bilingual Department/ Central

Office/Curriculum & Instruction Department will generate an individual electronic **Course/Credit Validation Analysis (CVA)** for students coming from **out-of-country** who completed grades in their home country.

2. For student coming from México, Parent/Guardian must provide Campus Counselor with an official report card and/or Academic Transcript; including 8th grade transcripts or its equivalent, and above. "**Secundaria (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>) and Preparatoria (10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)**". Parent/Guardian must sign the "**CVA\_Parent's Authorization Letter,**" if deemed necessary to verify academic background of the student in Mexico.
  3. Once the student **BISD\_CVA** has been reviewed and approved at the Central Office, the student will be placed promptly in the appropriate grade level and/or subjects; reclassification or grade level changes must be done as needed.
- ii. Under special circumstances , high school equivalent courses earned in Preparatoria (Grades 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>) **may be** analyzed and evaluated by a third party Credit Validation System through the LUCHA Program (Language Learners at the University of Texas at Austin's Center for Hispanic Achievement) to ensure proper class placement and to award credits for graduation plan. Credit Validation services from UT Austin must be authorized by the Bilingual Department Director.

#### **CONTROVERSIAL LIBRARY ISSUES**

The selection of library acquisitions on controversial issues shall endeavor to maintain a balanced collection representing various views. Library materials shall be chosen to clarify historical and contemporary forces by presenting and analyzing intergroup tension and conflict objectively, placing emphasis on recognizing and understanding social and economic problems (See also Parental Rights and Responsibilities section regarding instruction about controversial issues and the section regarding human sexuality instruction).

Any parent of a District student, employee, or other resident may formally challenge an instructional resource used in the District's educational program on the basis of appropriateness. All formal objections to instructional resources shall be made on the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form [See **EFA-E**]. The form shall be completed and signed by the concerned party and filed with the principal or designee. Upon receipt of the request, the principal shall appoint a Reconsideration Committee, which shall review the challenged material and determine whether it conforms to the principles of selection set out in **EFA [LOCAL]**. The decision of the Reconsideration Committee is binding for the affected school. The concerned party may appeal the decision of the Reconsideration Committee to the Board of Trustees by filing a written request with the Superintendent within seven days of the Reconsideration Committee's ruling. The request for a Board hearing shall contain a copy of the original complaint, Reconsideration Committee's report, and dates of conferences with the principal or designee.

#### **CREDIT BY CORRESPONDENCE COURSES**

The Brownsville Independent School District shall follow the mandates as set forth in **Chapter 74.23. [T.E.C]**:

1. Courses can only be taken from the University of Texas at Austin, Texas Tech University, or another public institution of higher education approved by the commissioner of education
2. Students, considering a correspondence course or distance learning must contact a counselor;
3. The principal shall set the date and time for correspondence course examinations;
4. Courses shall be used for emergency or enrichment only and should not be substituted for residence work;
5. Students, selecting this option, are limited to 4 credits for meeting the State's graduation requirements;
6. Fees are to be paid by the student; and
7. All correspondence and distance learning courses are Level One weight as outlined in the BISD Grading Policy.

Students who enter high school in the 2019-2020 school year and THEREAFTER, will adhere to the BISD Board Approved Grade Weight Systems. For details see page 36 from the Course Listing Guide.

#### **CREDIT BY EXAMINATION WITH PRIOR INSTRUCTION**

Credit by examination will follow the guidelines set by **Rules for Curriculum, §74.24**. Students may use credit by examination to demonstrate mastery to earn credit in any academic course at the high school level with the prior approval of the appropriate administrator. Such examinations shall assess the student's mastery of the essential knowledge and skills and shall be approved by the Superintendent or designee. The district will recognize results of a test from Texas Tech University or The University of Texas at Austin.

**Eligibility:** To be eligible to earn credit by examination, a student shall have had prior instruction in the subject or course, as determined by the District on the basis of a review of the student's educational records.

**Excessive Absences:** With the approval of the principal, a student who has excessive absences may be permitted to earn or regain course credit through credit by examination.

**Extracurricular Activities:** Credit by examination shall not be used to gain eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.

**Fees:** A **non-refundable fee** per test must be paid by the student upon registration for the Credit by Examination. The campus counselor will provide the student the cost amount required for the deposit.

**Passing score:** To receive credit, students shall score a grade of 70 or above on the examination.

**Procedures:** Tests shall be administered according to procedures approved by the Superintendent or designee. Three credit-by-exam opportunities will be offered to students, one in the fall, one in the spring, and one in the summer of each school year. Students must contact their school counselor for the exact time, location, and date of the credit by exam.

### **CREDIT BY EXAMINATION WITH NO PRIOR INSTRUCTION**

The Brownsville Independent School District provides at least one window to test between January 1 and March 31, one between April 1 and June 30, one between July 1 and September 30, and one between October 1 and December 31 annually for acceleration in Grades K-12 for BISD students only. The dates are designed to meet the needs of all students and are publicized in the community. BISD does not charge students for the exams for acceleration. The district administers examinations developed by Texas Tech University.

1. A student in pre-kindergarten may be accelerated one grade level if he/she meets the following requirements:
  - a) A score of 80% or above on a kindergarten and mathematics criterion referenced test, language arts, science, and social studies, or
  - b) A school district representative recommends that the student be accelerated, and
  - c) The student's parent/guardian gives written approval for the acceleration.

If a student is given credit in a subject on the basis of an examination, the District must enter the examination score on the student's report card. Students who have received prior instruction in the grade level he/she wants to skip are not eligible for testing.

2. A student in Grades K-5 may be accelerated one grade level if he/she meets the following requirements:
  - a) The student scores 80% or higher on a state approved test for the grade level he/she wants to skip in each of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies;
  - b) A school district representative recommends that the student be accelerated; and
  - c) The student's parent/guardian gives written approval for the acceleration.

If a student is given credit in a subject on the basis of an examination, the school district must enter the examination score on the student's report card. Students who have received prior instruction in the grade level he/she wants to skip are not eligible for this testing.

3. A student in grades 6-12 may be accelerated one grade level if he/she meets the following requirements:
  - a) The student scores 80% or higher for both semesters on a state approved test for the grade level he/she wants to skip in each of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies;
  - b) A school district representative recommends that the student be accelerated, and the student's parent/guardian gives written approval for the acceleration.

If a student is given credit in a subject on the basis of an examination, the school district must enter the examination score on the student's report card. Students who have received prior instruction in the grade level he/she wants to skip are not eligible for this testing. These requirements follow the State Board of Education Rules as stated in the **Texas Education Code, 28.23**. Students who are interested in credit by examination without prior instruction may contact the BISD Department of College Career & Military Readiness.

### **DUAL AND CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT**

BISD is an Early College High School District. This means that all high school students are eligible to begin taking dual credit courses beginning in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade if the students meets all of the institute of higher education's (IHE) entrance requirements and course prerequisites. There is no limit on the number of dual credit courses a student may earn during a particular school year. However, students are advised to only take those courses that are part of the college core hours and/or lead to an Associate Degree. Failure to adhere to these recommendations can adversely affect a student's college financial aid, on-time college graduation status and ability to earn a college degree.

BISD dual credit course instructors must meet the same standards, including minimal requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and approval procedures used by the college to select faculty responsible for teaching the same courses at the main campus of the college. The credits/grades for dual credit courses shall be posted on the college and high school student transcript upon a student's completion of the performance required in the course.

### **eSchoolPLUS**

eSchoolPLUS is a student management system that helps educators and parents by providing them direct, real-time access to the most relevant student information available. It provides a single integrated web-based system with a secure, centralized real-time student database.

## **FACILITIES PROGRAM**

The District maintains 34 Elementary Schools, 10 Middle Schools, 6 Early College High Schools, and 5 special campuses: Brownsville Academic Center (BAC), Brownsville Learning Academy (BLA) 6-12, Lincoln Park School (LP), Brownsville Early College (BECHS), and the Regional School for the Deaf. An ongoing maintenance program is in place. Students are expected to demonstrate respect and care for school facilities and equipment.

## **GIFTED AND TALENTED (GALAXY) PROGRAM**

Brownsville ISD identifies gifted and talented youth by utilizing an identification process, which consists of nomination, screening, and selection.

### **Kindergarten GT Academic Testing**

As a district initiative, all kinder students are administered the Raven Progressive Matrices. Those students who perform at an 85% (level 4 or 5) or higher are eligible to continue with the testing process, which consists of the following assessments:

1. Renzulli-Hartman Teacher Checklist
2. Parent Observation
3. Torrance Tests of Creativity

### **Grades 1-12 GT Academic Testing**

Nominated students in grades 1-12 are administered the Raven Progressive Matrices. Those students who perform at an 85% (level 4 or 5) or higher are eligible to continue with the testing process, which consists of the following assessments:

1. Renzulli-Hartman Teacher Checklist
2. Parent Observation
3. Achievement Test

Students in grades K-12 are identified as needing the GT services if 3 of the 4 criteria are within the qualifying range.

### **Fine Arts Testing**

Students in grades 7-12 may be nominated for band, choir, art, dance, and/or theater art. Band, choir and art are divided into 2 phases.

#### Band and Choir

- Phase I – music audiation assessment (a rubric score of 4-5 is needed to move on to phase II)
- Phase II – Portfolio with sample recording and Teacher Checklist.

#### Art

- Phase I - art assessment (a rubric score of 4-5 is needed to move on to phase II)
- Phase II – Portfolio and Teacher Checklist

#### Dance

- Portfolio, Teacher Checklist, Interview and Audition

#### Theater

- Portfolio, Teacher Checklist, Interview and Audition

Students in grades 7-12 are qualified for services if the criteria falls within the qualifying range.

## **GRADING/PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS**

All academic subject grades are based on a numerical scale of 0-100. Any grade below 70 is failing. Report cards are distributed to secondary students approximately one week after the grading period ends. Elementary students receive report cards on the Tuesday following the end of a grading period. Pre-kindergarten students receive a progress report with D- Developed and SD- Still Developing.

Grade reports shall be issued every six weeks in elementary, middle and high schools on a form/format approved by the Superintendent or designee as per **EIE [LOCAL]**. The campus principals will notify parents if there is a deviation from the above schedule.

Interim progress reports shall be mailed to parents every three weeks of a student's performance in each class or subject when the grade average is lower than 70. A conference with the teacher may be scheduled at this time. Tutorial programs are available on each campus for any student failing language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies.

**NOTE:** All grading will follow the approved 2020-2021 Grading Procedures to include:

- 1.- Face to Face (F2F) Blended ( Traditional with tech)
- 2.- At Home Learning (Synchronous or Asynchronous)

## **GRADE CLASSIFICATION OF OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENTS**

- A. The transcript or Academic Achievement Record (AAR) is important for a student's appropriate placement and continued education.
- B. Out-of-District students within Texas must be enrolled under the appropriated classification placement shown in the transcript/AAR and/or withdrawal documentation.

- C. Out-of-District students within Texas must graduate under the course listing guide in effect when they entered as freshmen with their age appropriate BISD peers.
- D. A school may recalculate placement based on BISD guidelines for credits for out-of-state students.
- E. Parents and students must be counseled on classification status.

### **GRADE POINT AVERAGES-HIGH SCHOOL**

#### Grade Point Averages (GPA)

- A. Students who entered high school in the 2018-2019 school year and PRIOR:

All courses are included in computing GPA/Class Ranking except repeated course(s) that were previously completed successfully. BISD is on a weighted scale of 4.0. Level IV includes all AP exam scores of 3, 4, or 5 and carries a higher grade point weight than Level III, Level II or Level I courses. Level III courses carry a higher grade point weight than Level II or Level I courses. Level II courses carry a higher grade point weight than Level I courses.

- B. Students who enter high school in the 2019-2020 school year and THEREAFTER:

The following courses will be averaged into the grade point average (GPA) as outlined in TEA Chapter 74. Curriculum Requirements Subchapter B. Graduation Requirements:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- All Advanced Placement courses
- All Dual Enrollment courses
- All Project Lead the Way courses

Any repeated course from those listed above that was previously successfully completed, will be assigned as a local credit course and will not carry any GPA weight. BISD is on a weighted scale of 4.0. Level Three courses carry a higher grade point weight than Level Two or Level One courses. Level Two courses carry a higher grade point weight than Level One courses.

- C. Students who enter high school in the 2020-2021 school year and THEREAFTER:

All high school core area courses (aforementioned in letter B) taken in middle school will appear on the high school transcript and will be figured into the students' high school grade point average (GPA).

### **GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) TIE BREAKER**

1. In case of ties for top 10% graduating honor students, calculate to the fourth decimal point (No Rounding)
2. In case of continued ties, cumulative scholastic averages shall be used. Cumulative scholastic average is defined as:
  - a. Average of all grades since grade 9 without grade weights, and
  - b. Exclusion of high school courses taken and successfully completed in middle school.
3. In case of continued ties, count number of Level Two and Three courses successfully completed throughout the students' entire high school career.

### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

In the Brownsville Independent School District, graduating students who meet credit and state mandated test requirements may participate in graduation activities and ceremonies. The Superintendent or his designee may withhold the privilege of participating in senior and/or graduation activities/ceremonies if the student violates the Student Code of Conduct and/or other law, even though all credits and state-mandated tests have been completed. Students who do not attend the ceremony will contact the campus administrator to make arrangements to obtain the high school diploma and transcripts.

Midterm graduates should continue to live up to the behavioral expectations for all BISD students. Committing any criminal offense that may damage the school district's image may result in a student being denied the privilege to participate in graduation activities and ceremonies **[Refer to the Student Code of Conduct under Participation in Graduation Activities]**.

Students in BISD will graduate under guidelines stipulated by the State of Texas Education Code. The District advises high school students, especially those in Grade 12, to check their credits at the beginning of their final year to verify courses needed for graduation and to confirm transcript records. All high school graduation requirements specified in **TEC 74.11-21** will be strictly adhered to for all BISD students.

Students who were in grade 9, 10, or 11 in the 2013-2014 school year must be given a choice to graduate under the Recommended High School Program, Distinguished Achievement Program, or Foundation High School Program.

The Foundation Plan expands the availability of career and technology (CTE) courses, and encourages students to select a personal pathway of study, called an **ENDORSEMENT**. All students who enter the 9th grade in 2014-2015 and thereafter will be required to indicate in writing an endorsement pathway in Arts and Humanities, Business and Industry, Public Service, STEM (Science and Math) and/or Multidisciplinary.

Based on the individual student graduation plan, the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) assessment system mandated by House Bill 5 requires that students who enter grade 9 in and after 2011-2012 must take 5 End of Course exams [**English 1, English 2, Algebra 1, Biology, and United States History**].

Both the Foundation with Endorsement and Distinguished Level of Achievement High School Program graduation plans allow BISD students to graduate with 26 credits. Additionally, a student may graduate under Foundation High School Program without an endorsement (22 credits) after the student's sophomore year files in writing with a school counselor signed by the student's legal guardian. Regardless of the course of study pursued, all high school graduates receive the same type of diploma. Students and parents will be informed of the advantages of graduating under the Foundation with Endorsement and Distinguished Level of Achievement graduation plans. The Academic Achievement Record (AAR/Transcript) describes in detail the program and achievement of the student. The seal affixed to the student's academic achievement record indicates the program plan that has been completed. All BISD students are entitled to their choice of electives. Each student's graduation plan must reflect a well-balanced program of academics and electives as well as a focused career program spread out evenly over the course of the student's high school career.

TSI and SAT/ACT test fee waivers will be available at least 1 time during their high school program as part of the adopted curriculum. PSAT tests for sophomores are highly recommended. Focused test-taking, SAT-ACT preparation courses, and study skills courses will be part of the curricular offerings for all students on a yearly basis.

Credit-by-Exam with Prior Instruction, Credit-for-Acceleration, Correspondence Courses, and Concurrent & Dual Enrollment courses are available for BISD students. In addition, middle school students have the opportunity to earn high school credits in selected courses.

Magnet programs approved by the BISD Board of Trustees will regularly update their individual Course Listings, Courses of Study, and Recommended Course Sequences to provide students with core course requirements with a magnet area focused content. Needed program/course substitutions will be submitted to the BISD Board of Trustees for approval.

## **GRADUATION PLANS – CREDITS FOR GRADUATION**

### **Chapter 74 Curriculum Requirements, Subchapter B, Graduation Requirements Beginning with School Year 2014 – 2015**

Discipline	Foundation High School Program* without an endorsement	Foundation High School Program with one or more endorsement(s)	Distinguished Level Of Achievement High School Program** with one or more endorsement(s)
<b>For students who enter Grade 9 in and after 2014-2015</b>			
English Language Arts	4	4	4
Mathematics	3	4	4***
Science	3	4	4
Social Studies	2½	2½	2½
Economics	½	½	½
Other Language	2	2	2
Fine Arts	1	1	1
Physical Education	1	1	1
Speech	½	½	½
Health (BISD requirement)	½	½	½
Endorsement Sequence	N/A	4	4
Electives	4	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>

\*Foundation High School Program

A student may graduate under the Foundation High School Program without an endorsement (22 credits) after the student's sophomore year and he/she files in writing with a school counselor signed by the student's legal guardian.

\*\*Distinguished Level of Achievement High School Program

**§Chapter 74.11(e): A student may earn a distinguished level of achievement by successfully completing all of the following:**

1. Four credits in math, to include Algebra II;
2. Four credits in science;

3. Remaining curriculum requirements of the Foundation High School Program; and
4. Curriculum requirements for at least one endorsement.

\*\*\*Algebra II is required for the STEM endorsement and to earn the Distinguished Level of Achievement.

**HIGH SCHOOL RANKING OF STUDENTS**

The following guidelines have been established to determine the ranking of students at the high school level:

- A. All students will be ranked for final class placement at the end of the first semester based on the fall enrollment grade level classification for end of year recognition purposes.
- B. 11<sup>th</sup> grade students GPA's/Ranks will be recalculated at the beginning of their senior year for the purpose of Top 10 Percent Eligibility for college admissions.
- C. All graduates will be ranked with the fall enrolled grade level as per the number of credit classification standards.
- D. To be ranked as one of the three top students of the graduation class, the student must:
  1. have met the number of credit classification standards;
  2. have completed two years in a BISD high school;
  3. be enrolled the fall and spring semester of his/her senior year on the campus from which he/she graduates (Exception: migrant students); and
  4. be enrolled four consecutive years in high school.

For two school years following their graduation, students who are ranked in the top ten percent of their graduating class are eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas. Students and parents should see the school counselor for further information regarding how to apply and the deadline for applications [See EIC Local].

**HOMEWORK**

In an effort to strengthen the instructional program of the District, the Board of Trustees has adopted a policy for homework, which recognizes that assignments to extend instructional activities beyond the normal school day are essential for maximum learning. Parents are encouraged to see that students complete their homework assignments. Each school will communicate its specific homework rules and standards to students and their parents. Generally, BISD's parameters regarding homework are as follows:

**Elementary Schools:** Homework assignments for pre-kindergarten or kindergarten students include simply requiring students to take books home to read and return the following day and bringing items for "show and tell." By doing so, students are learning to be responsible for following through on assigned tasks.

In grades PK-5, the suggested amounts of time for homework per grade level are:

PK	5 - 10 minutes
K	10 - 15 minutes
1	15 - 25 minutes
2	20 - 35 minutes
3 & 4	30 - 45 minutes
5	30 - 55 minutes

**Middle Schools:** Homework should be reasonable and relevant. Academic teams, in conjunction with elective teachers, are responsible for coordinating the quantity and quality of homework and should provide students within the teams' copies of homework guidelines. Copies of each academic team homework procedure, as well as all teachers' homework procedures, are on file in the campus principal's office.

**High Schools:** Homework should be reasonable, relevant, and challenging. Homework should connect schoolwork with real world situations.

**MIGRANT STUDENT CREDITS**

Migrant students who enter late or withdraw early are strongly encouraged to enroll in a migrant tutorial program when available. The Brownsville Independent School District has a commitment to ensure an equal educational opportunity for migrant students, including options for the completion of work missed due to late entry and/or early withdrawal and the accumulation of credit by secondary students towards high school graduation.

**PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Opportunities for student success are greatly enhanced when parents and teachers work together. The school will notify parents of the necessity for a conference with the teacher at the time the report card is issued. When a student has a grade of 69 or below in any subject listed on the report card, the parent should contact the school to schedule a conference with the teacher. BISD will conduct at least two (2) parent-teacher conferences per year. Parents will be notified of those dates. Tutorial programs and/or other alternative strategies are available on each campus for any student failing language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies. Students with failing grades and students whose grades are border line are encouraged to participate in tutorials or other alternative programs which provide remedial strategies.

## PERFORMANCE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A student may earn a performance acknowledgment(s) by demonstrating an outstanding performance in the areas of (1) dual credit or an associate degree earned while in high school, (2) bilingualism and biliteracy, (3) Advanced Placement, (4) PSAT, ACTPLAN, SAT or ACT, and/or (5) National or Internationally Recognized Business or Industry Certification or License.

## HONORS/ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM

The Advanced Placement program provides the goals for the Honors program. Honors classes are considered preparation classes for students interested in taking AP courses in high school. These classes incorporate all the core subject areas: math, reading/English, science, social studies, and Spanish in grades 6-11. The AP exam score may earn college credit for the course(s), depending on the requirements of the university. Students must meet the following criteria in order to be placed in Brownsville ISD Honors/ AP Program:

- Have at least an 85 average from the most recent grade in the specific academic discipline for a non Honors/AP class or have passed the previous Honors/AP class in the specific academic discipline;
- Have passed all state assessment areas tested to date, or
- Students may enter through the alternate route to Honors/AP courses. The alternative route requires a letter of recommendation signed by the campus principal. The letter of recommendation may be found in the District's Honors/AP Handbook located on the Department of College Career and Military Readiness' website.

In addition, a freshman, sophomore, or junior student who scores a 3, 4 or 5 on an AP exam will receive level 4 course weight after the AP scores are received in late July.

## PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

The Brownsville ISD believes that "early literacy opens the door to higher learning". Brownsville ISD offers many opportunities for preschool age children to enter school as early as possible. All campuses offer these programs. Each student, satisfying the requirements, will be admitted if his/her parent, guardian, or person having lawful control of the student resides within the district. Registration requirements and eligibility criteria are specific to each program **[Please refer to program guidelines and eligibility criteria]**.

**PK 3 PROGRAM:** Families who have three-year-old children and qualify for the program can register at the campus of their choice with available space. THREE-YEAR OLDs as of September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year may register at all elementary school campuses who implement the PK 3 PROGRAM:

- Local Expansion and Title I-A Three-Year-Old Programs for PK 3 students.
- Title I Program sites will need students to be identified as educationally disadvantaged according to state standards.

In addition, program guidelines require that a child be toilet trained, unless the child is currently eligible and is receiving documented special education services and/or 504 Medical.

School Readiness Initiative is also available in partnership with NINOS Head Start. Three Year Olds participating must meet the free lunch educationally disadvantaged state criteria.

**PK 4 PROGRAM:** Families who have **four-year-old children** and qualify for the program can register at the campus of their choice. FOUR-YEAR OLDs as September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year may register at all elementary school campuses. PK 4 students can be eligible for enrollment, and must be/have:

- four (4) years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year and
- educationally disadvantaged according to state standards or
- unable to speak and comprehend the English language or
- homeless or
- the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserved component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority or
- the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserved component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty, or
- foster care status or
- the child of a person eligible for Star of Texas award as a peace officer, firefighter and emergency medical responders.

In addition, program guidelines require that a child be toilet trained, unless the child is currently eligible and is receiving documented special education services and/or 504 Medical.

Students who participated in the PK 3 Program, and were not eligible, may attend the sites of Breedon, Martin, Pullam, and Sharp for the PK 4 Program.

Finally, students who are not eligible for the PK 4 Program and did not participate in the PK 3 Program will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

### **Elementary Schools**

In grades 1-5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on a yearly average of 70 or above in each of the following: Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The Language Arts average shall be derived from averaging the English or ESL, Spelling, and Writing grades. BISD does not believe in retention and does not grant social promotions. Parents and schools are to work together to ensure academic success for students throughout their educational careers. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of extended day, extended year, and tutorial sessions.

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.

- In order to be promoted to grade 6, students who are enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the Mathematics and Reading sections of the grade 5 assessments in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 9, students who are enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the Mathematics and Reading sections of the grade 8 assessments in English.

**NOTE:** All fifth and eighth grade students will only be promoted to the next grade level in Texas public schools if they have passed the fifth and eighth grade state assessment Reading and Math tests as well as meeting the District's promotion requirements [**EIE Local**]. Tutorials and several opportunities to test will be provided. Parents are advised of the necessity of closely monitoring their child (ren)'s progress in math and reading throughout the early childhood years (PREK-3).

### **Student Success Initiative (SSI) Grade 5 and Grade 8 [EIE Local]**

In addition to local standards for mastery and promotion, students in grades 5 and 8 must meet the passing standard on an applicable assessment instrument in the subjects areas required under state law in order to be promoted to the next grade level. Students who are receiving services under Section 504 and who are identified with dyslexia and related disorders in grades 5 and 8 must meet the passing standard on an applicable assessment instrument in the subjects required under state law in order to be promoted to the next grade level. The 504 Committee will determine which assessment is appropriate for the individual student and will make all decisions involving accelerated instruction.

Students who are receiving special education services and who take the STAAR assessment are subject to SSI grade advancement requirements. The ARD committee will determine which assessment is appropriate for the individual student and will make all decisions involving accelerated instruction and promotion. In the case where a student's IEP states that the student is to take one of these assessments, and the student does not meet the passing standard on the assessment, the ARD committee will serve as the Grade Placement Committee (GPC). Students who are participating in the STAAR Alternate 2 assessment are not subject to SSI grade advancement requirements.

### **Accelerated Instruction for Grades 3 – 8**

If a student in grades 3 – 8 fails to demonstrate proficiency on a state-mandated assessment, the student shall be provided accelerated instruction in accordance with state law. Additionally, students in grades 5 and 8 shall be subject to all provisions of grade advancement testing.

If an 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade student in the conservatorship of DFPS transfers from BISD to another district and is ineligible to graduate from the receiving district but does meet all BISD graduation requirements the district will award a diploma at the students request [**SB 1404, 2013**].

## Course Requirements for Students Grade 6 in 2020-2021

Course Requirements for Grade 6	Semester	Promotion/Retention Requirements
Reading/Reading SL	2	
English/*ESL I/ESL II/English SL	2	70% Final Average
Mathematics	2	
Social Studies (Contemporary World Societies)	2	
Science	2	
Physical Education/Health or Pre-Athletics/Health	2	
Two Electives:	4	Pass Electives with a 70% overall yearly average (composite)
Spanish I, Tech Applications, Band, Choir, Art, Dance**, Ballroom Dance**, Introduction to Team Sports, Flag Football or Tennis		
Course Requirements for Grade 7	Semester	Promotion/Retention Requirements
Reading/Reading SL	2	
English/*ESL I/ESL II/English SL	2	Pass each core area course with a 70% Final Average
Mathematics	2	
Texas History	2	
Science	2	
Physical Education or Athletics	2	
Two Electives:	4	Pass Electives with a 70% overall yearly average (composite)
Spanish II, ^Principles of Applied Engineering, Band, Choir, Art,		
Course Requirements for Grade 8	Semester	Promotion/Retention Requirements
Reading/Reading SL	2	<b>Grade Advancement Requirement:</b>
English/*ESL I/ESL II/English SL	2	Required State Assessments. Pass each core area course with a 70% Final Average
Mathematics	2	
US History	2	
Science	2	
Health	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	Pass Electives with a 70% overall yearly average (composite)
Two Electives:		
Athletics Spanish, Band, Choir, Art, Dance**, Ballroom Dance**, or ^Robotics I, or Principles of Education		

\*ESL I is only required for students identified as Beginners. **NOTE: ESL II as recommended by LPAC. All EL students must be enrolled in SL courses.**

\*\* Dance and Ballroom Dance can count as Physical Education credit

\*\*\*A complete list of PE Options is available on p. 23, 37 and 38.

^Courses for High School Credit

Required Middle School Electives	
College and Career Readiness	1 Semester
Fine Arts	2 Semesters
Health	2 Semesters
Physical Education	4 Semesters

## High School

Grade level advancement for students in grades 9-12 shall be earned by course credits and other proficiency criteria where applicable. Changes in grade-level classification shall be made two times per year prior to the beginning of the fall and spring semester [EIE Local].

**NOTE:** Credits must be earned the semester prior to the grade classification posting.

### For students who entered 9<sup>th</sup> Grade in and after 2007-2008

<u>Class Placement</u>	<u>Credits</u>
Sophomore	6 credits
Junior	12 credits
Senior	19 credits

### **REQUIRED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Beginning in school year 2007-2008, a school district shall require a student enrolled in all day Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade to participate in moderate or vigorous daily physical activity for at least 30 minutes throughout the school year as part of the district's physical education curriculum or through structured activity during a school campus' daily recess. Beginning in school year 2008-2009, a school district shall require students who are enrolled in grade levels six, seven, and eight to participate in moderate or vigorous daily physical activity for at least 30 minutes for at least four semesters during those grade levels as part of the district's physical education curriculum.

**NOTE:** Physical impact activities may not be used as a disciplinary consequence.

A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to disability or illness may substitute an academic elective credit (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, or Social studies) or a course that is offered for credit as provided by the **TEC, §28.002(g-1)** for the physical education credit requirement. The determination regarding a student's ability to participate in physical activity will be made by the Section 504 committee or the student's ARD committee.

For students receiving special education services and have a medical condition that does not allow moderate or vigorous physical activity, the ARD committee will determine appropriate accommodations and/or an alternate physical education class (Adapted Physical Education) based on data provided by the parents, school nurse, the child's physician, and the adapted physical education teacher.

### **REQUIRED PHYSICAL FITNESS TESTING**

A school district shall annually assess the physical fitness of students enrolled in grades 3 through 12. The assessment instrument must be based on aerobic capacity, body composition, muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility. In addition, it must include criterion-referenced standards specific to a student's age and gender based on physical fitness level required for good health. A school district is required to annually compile the results and provide the summary results to the Texas Education Agency. Physical Fitness assessment results are confidential. Parents may request their child's individual assessment results.

For a student who is unable to participate in physical activities required by the Physical Fitness assessment due to a disability or illness, the Section 504 committee will determine appropriate accommodation/modifications, restrictions, and exemptions.

For students receiving special education services and have a medical condition that does not allow the physical activities required by the Physical Fitness assessment, the ARD committee will determine and document appropriate accommodations/ modifications, restrictions, and exemptions based on data provided by the parents, school nurse, and the child's physician. The ARD committee will also make these decisions for the required CPR training.

### **RETEACHING/RETESTING PROCEDURES**

Information concerning the re-teaching and retesting procedures at the various grade levels is documented in the Grading Procedures documents. Please contact your principal for clarification on this issue.

### **SCHOOL MESSENGER**

School Messenger is an automated system, where parents are notified by phone, e-mail or both when their child is marked absent. The key to the success of School Messenger relies heavily on the school having the students' correct telephone numbers. Consequently, parents must notify schools when there is a change in telephone numbers as well as home addresses. When parents receive a call regarding their child's absence, parents should first speak to their child to confirm his/her absence. If there is a question, contact the school and request to speak to the person in charge of School Messenger. Attendance is important. There is a BISD attendance standard of:

Elementary Schools.....	97.5%
Middle Schools .....	97%
Early College High Schools .....	96%

### **SCHOOL REPORT CARD**

The School Report Card is a requirement in state statute. The Texas Education Agency produces a School Report Card for every campus in the state. Each campus must provide the report to the parent or guardian of every student.

When possible, each of the indicators will be reported with two years of data, student groups, District data, state standards, and comparable campus group performance. Other school information, such as fluency, may also be included in the School Report Card.

### **SCHOOL STARTING AND ENDING TIMES**

\*The standard school time schedule for all schools is as follows:

High Schools	<b>8:50 a.m.</b>	<b>4:00 p.m.</b>
Middle Schools	<b>7:40 a.m.</b>	<b>2:50 p.m.</b>
Elementary Schools	<b>8:05 a.m.</b>	<b>3:15 p.m.</b>
Pre-K3-AM	<b>8:05 a.m.</b>	<b>11:15 a.m.</b>
1/2 Day Pre-K Lunch	<b>11:15 a.m.</b>	<b>12:15 p.m.</b>
Pre-K3 PM	<b>12:15 p.m.</b>	<b>3:15 p.m.</b>
All day Pre-4K	<b>8:05 a.m.</b>	<b>3:15 p.m.</b>

### **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

**\*check with each individual campus for exceptions**

The District provides special programs for students with disabilities, gifted and talented, educationally disadvantaged, at-risk, and bilingual students. In addition, special campus settings serve pregnant students, students who are parents, adult and continuing education students, and students who have been removed from their home campus for disciplinary reasons.

### **STATE-MANDATED TESTING AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

The State of Texas requires all graduating students to earn a passing score on the corresponding state-mandated assessments before they can receive a diploma. In BISD, graduating seniors who meet the credit requirements but who do not pass the state-mandated tests may participate in graduation activities, except the walk across the stage. Walking across the stage is reserved for students who meet all credit requirements and pass the respective STAAR/END OF COURSE (EOC).

For students receiving special education services, the ARD committee determines as part of participation in state and districtwide assessments whether satisfactory performance on the required state assessment is necessary for graduation.

The school shall issue a certificate of attendance to a student who receives special education services under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, and who has completed four years of high school, but has not completed the student's individualized education program. A school district shall allow a student who receives a certificate to participate in a graduation ceremony with students receiving high school diplomas. A student may participate in only one graduation ceremony under this subsection. This subsection does not preclude a student from receiving a diploma under subsection (c) (2). For additional information, see Section on Student Guide to Testing Requirements for High School Graduation. Based on the individual student graduation plan, the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program, the new assessment system mandated by House Bill 5, requires that students who enter grade 9 in and after 2011-2012 take 5 End of Course exams in the four academic subjects (English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History) **[See SB 149 for further information on graduation and STAAR]**.

### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

The District offers summer school programs for students in grades PreK-12. Summer school opportunities for elementary grades are offered for qualifying students through the different programs in the district. Summer school programs for Grades 6- 8 are designed for students who have not met promotion standards and in Grades 9-12 for students who need to regain credits or earn additional credits. In addition, academic and enrichment programs are available to address special populations. Extended Year Services are available through the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee to students with disabilities who meet the qualifying criteria. A bulletin detailing the summer school programs and registration dates/procedures is distributed in the spring.

### **SYNCHRONOUS/ASYNCHRONOUS**

TEA approved instructional models:

1. **Synchronous** – two-way, real-time, live, instruction between teachers and students, through the computer or other electronic devices or over the phone.
2. **Asynchronous** – a curricular experience where students engage in the learning materials on their own time, interacting intermittently with the teacher via the computer or other electronic devices or over the phone.

### **TEACHER ACCESS CENTER AND HOME ACCESS CENTER**

Two features found in **eSchoolPLUS** are the Teacher Access Center (TAC) and the Home Access Center (HAC). The TAC allows the teacher to monitor student information such as attendance, grades, progress reports and report cards through a single shared database across the district. The HAC allows parents and students to view student registration, scheduling, attendance, assignment, and grade information.

## **TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**

Parents of public school students in the United States of America have the right to know the professional qualifications of classroom teachers instructing their children. Federal law, No Child Left Behind, requires that the school district provide you the following information in a timely manner if you request it:

- Whether or not the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for grades/subjects he/she is teaching;
- Whether or not the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances;
- The teacher's college major; whether the individual has any advanced degrees and the field of discipline or the certification or degree; and/or
- Whether or not paraprofessionals provide services to your child, and, if so, their qualifications.

The BISD Human Resource Department or the campus principal may provide this information to parents/legal guardians of BISD students.

Teachers in the Early Childhood programs in BISD must be highly qualified and obtain 30 hours of professional development each year.

## **TESTING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION**

Each child and their parent shall be notified in writing no later than the beginning of the child's seventh grade year of the essential skills and knowledge to be measured on the exit level and end-of-course tests administered under the **Texas Education Code [TEC], Chapter 39, Subchapter B.**

Notice shall indicate that: (1) each 7th - 12th grade student new to the District shall be notified of the testing requirements for graduation, including the essential skills and knowledge to be measured; and (2) each student required to take the exit level TAKS or STAAR/EOC and out-of-school individuals shall be notified of the dates, times, and locations of testing.

To be eligible to receive a high school diploma, a nonexempt student must demonstrate satisfactory performance, as determined by the **State Board of Education [SBOE]**, on the exit level TAKS or STAAR/EOC tests specified in the **TEC, §39.025.** A student, using the exit level test to fulfill the testing requirements for graduation, must be tested by either a Texas public school district or Texas education service center.

For students receiving special education services, the ARD committee determines as part of participation in state and district wide assessments whether satisfactory performance on the required state assessment is necessary for graduation.

According to procedures specified in the appropriate test administration materials, an eligible student or out-of-school individual may retest each time the exit level tests are administered.

A foreign exchange student is required to take the STAAR EOC assessments for courses in which he/she is enrolled. However, the student is not required to retest unless he or she is planning to earn a Texas high school diploma.

## **TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS**

Accommodations or designated supports are changes to materials or procedures that enable students to access learning and testing. It is important to keep in mind that while some accommodations may be appropriate for instructional use, they may not be appropriate or allowable on statewide assessments.

The Texas Education Agency accommodations policies are divided into three main categories.

1. Accessibility Features: These are procedures and materials that are allowed for any student who needs them.
2. Designated Supports: These are locally-approved supports for students, who meet eligibility criteria.
3. Designated Supports Requiring TEA Approval: These supports require the submission and approval of a TEA accommodation Request form.

Refer to [tea.texas.gov/student\\_assessment/accommodations](http://tea.texas.gov/student_assessment/accommodations) for more information.

## **TESTING SITES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The use of cell phones or other telecommunication devices during testing is prohibited. The student shall be required to sign a Student Cellphone Oath in the testing site indicating compliance with the district cellphone policy.

During a test, if a student is found in possession of a phone at any time, including breaks, the student may be immediately dismissed from the testing site, his/her scores may be invalidated, and the device may be confiscated. This also applies to other prohibited digital and/or electronic devices such as a pager, PDA, Apple or smart watch, camera, MP3 Player, iPod, wired or wireless headphones and earpieces, recording device, laptop computer, tablet, gaming device or other related equipment.

If a cell phone or other electronic device is brought into the testing area, it must be completely turned off and turned in to the test administrator. It may not be on vibrate or silent mode. Devices may not be accessed during the exam, even to check messages. They may not be kept on the testing desk. The possession of an unauthorized electronic device during a test will be considered cheating and the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

Communication in any form is not permitted during the test administration. Discussion or sharing of test content during and after the test is prohibited.

The use of a calculator unless specifically instructed to do so is prohibited **[See TEA Calculator Policy for allowable Assessments]**.



# Brownsville Independent School District

1900 Price Road, Brownsville, Texas, 78521 (956) 548-8000, [www.bisd.us](http://www.bisd.us)

Dr. Rene Gutierrez  
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Parent/Guardian:

It is our goal to ensure a safe and supportive environment to all of our students. The legislature passed HB 742 related to student information required to be provided at the time of enrollment in public schools. This form allows you to disclose whether your child has a food allergy or severe food allergy that you believe should be disclosed to the Brownsville Independent School District in order to enable the District to take necessary precautions for your child's safety.

"Severe food allergy" means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human body to a food-borne allergen introduced by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact that requires immediate medical attention.

Please list any foods to which your child is allergic or severely allergic, as well as the nature of your child's allergic reaction to the food.

Food:	Nature of allergic reaction to the food:

The District will maintain the confidentiality of the information provided above and may disclose the information to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only within the limitations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and District policy.

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ School Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

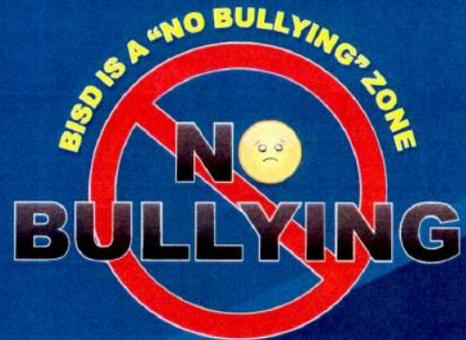
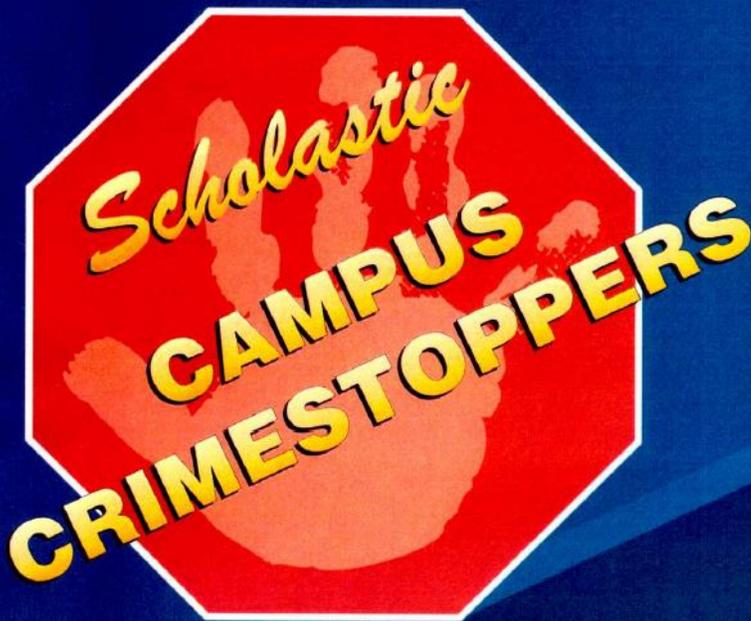
Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Form was received by the School: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed for to your school.

BISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or genetic information in employment or provision of services, programs or activities.



**Report Bullying / Cyberbullying  
Anonymous Online Reporting  
[www.bisd.us](http://www.bisd.us)**

**Hotline 408-0049**

**All calls are confidential.  
No court testimony is  
required and cash rewards  
are available.**

**Brownsville Independent School District • Police & Security Services**

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