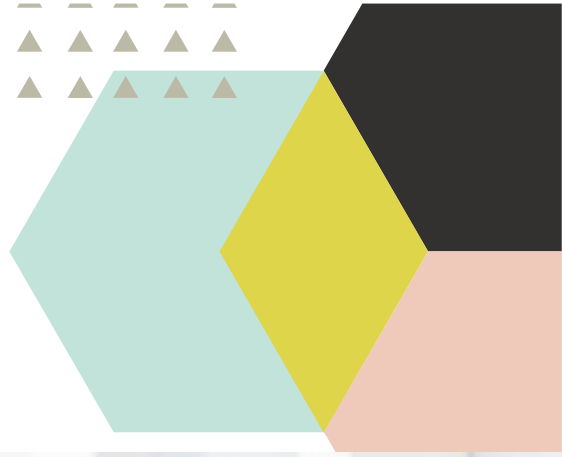




*Always Innovating*

**South  
Texas ISD**

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 6-12**



# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

[www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net)



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## **Employee Handbook Receipt**

Name

Campus/Department

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the South Texas ISD Employee Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

Employees have the option of receiving the handbook in electronic format or hard copy. The handbook is located on our website, [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net), under the Staff Resources.

Please indicate your choice below:

- I choose to receive the employee handbook in electronic format and accept responsibility for accessing it according to the instructions provided.
- I choose to receive a hard copy of the employee handbook.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this book. As the district provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

I understand that no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will employment relationships are intended by this handbook.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform my supervisor or department head of any changes in personal information such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor. If I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

Signature Date

Print

Please sign and date this receipt and forward it to your immediate supervisor.

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all district policies and procedures are included. Those that are have been summarized.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. Nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of noncontract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate district office. District policies can be accessed on line at [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net)

## **District Information**

### **Description of the District**

South Texas Independent School District (STISD) serves 6th grade to high school students who live along the southernmost tip of Texas, the region known as the Rio Grande Valley. The district stretches over three counties, Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy, and overlaps 28 other school districts, an area of 3,643 miles.

The district is comprised of seven magnet schools:

- South Texas ISD Preparatory Academy (STPA) in Edinburg
- South Texas ISD Rising Scholars Academy (RSA)
- South Texas ISD High School for Health Professions in Mercedes; formerly known as Med High
- South Texas ISD Academy for Medical Professions in Olmito, formerly known as Medical Academy
- South Texas ISD Science Academy in Mercedes
- South Texas ISD World Scholars (World Scholars) in Edinburg, formerly known as BETA
- South Texas ISD Virtual Academy in Mercedes

The only all-magnet school district in the state, STISD offers Valley students with an educational alternative. STISD schools provide a personal environment, a strong scholastic program and hands-on training in various professional career fields.

Because it is a public-school district, there is no cost for students to attend, and bus transportation is also free of charge. Best of all, STISD schools maintain an open enrollment policy, meaning any student with the desire to learn and work hard can attend so long as he or she resides within the tri-county area.

All schools are accredited by the Texas Education Agency and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Over 95 percent of STISD graduates continue their education at major universities or technical colleges.

### **Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives**

#### **Policy AE**

South Texas ISD nurtures the development of lifelong learners as they excel in a challenging, focused curriculum that leads to successful postsecondary education and careers.

### **Board of Trustees**

#### **Policies BA, BB series, BD series, and BE series**

Texas law grants the board of trustees the power to govern and oversee the management of the district's schools. The board is the policy-making body within the district and has overall responsibility for the curriculum, school taxes, annual budget, employment of the superintendent and other professional staff, and facilities. The board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal laws and regulations.

At the expiration of the term of office of each Board member from a county commissioner precinct, a successor shall be elected at an election held in that precinct. At the expiration of the term of office of each Board member at large, the county judge of the county from which the Board member was appointed must appoint the successor.

Each biennium, half of the Board members elected from county commissioner precincts in each county shall be elected and half of the at-large Board members shall be appointed by the county judge of each county. The terms of office of all Board members shall be four years.

Current board members include:

David Briones, La Feria  
Douglas "Doug" E. Buchanan, Raymondville  
Henry LeVrier, Brownsville  
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D., Edinburg  
Abiel J. Cantú, Raymondville  
Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantú, Los Fresnos  
Sasha Crane, McAllen  
Javier Farias, McAllen  
Adrian Garcia, Brownsville  
Margarita Garcia, San Juan  
Hector Gonzales, Lyford  
Yolanda Kamel, McAllen  
Robert "Bobby" J. Lerma, Brownsville  
Sylvia Lopez, Brownsville  
Ricardo Ochoa, MD, Weslaco  
Israel G. Quintanilla, Raymondville  
Rodolfo "Rudy" Ramirez, Edinburg  
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez, Brownsville  
Norberto "Beto" Salinas, Mission  
Jaime Solis, Edinburg  
Natividad "Nati" Sosa, Mission  
David Torres, Edinburg  
Rick Villarreal, DDS, Brownsville  
Ruth Villarreal, Mission

The board usually meets the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and each campus at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.



All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the board to go into a closed session from which the public and others are excluded. Closed session may occur for such things as discussing prospective gifts or donations, real-property acquisition, certain personnel matters including employee complaints, security matters, student discipline, or consulting with attorneys regarding pending litigation.

Board Meeting Schedule for 2022-2023

2022-2023 Meetings can be found in our district website at [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net)

## **Administration**

Marco Antonio Lara Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

Efrain Garza, Deputy Superintendent

Marla R. Knaub, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

Lissa Frausto, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Nereyda Trevino, Chief Academic Officer

Amanda Odom, Administrator for Public Relations & Marketing

# 2022-2023 Academic Calendar



First Day of Instruction Aug 8  
Last Day of Instruction May 18

## INSTRUCTIONAL PERIODS

<b>Semester 1</b>	<b>88</b>
Q1 Reporting Period (Oct 6)	43
Q2 Reporting Period (Dec 20)	45
<b>Semester 2</b>	<b>84</b>
Q3 Reporting Period (Mar 10)	41
Q4 Reporting Period (May 18)	43
<b>Total School Days</b>	<b>172</b>

## Minutes of Operation

Q1 Reporting Period	19,350
Q2 Reporting Period	20,250
Q3 Reporting Period	18,450
Q4 Reporting Period	19,350
<b>Total Minutes</b>	<b>77,400</b>

*TEA requires a minimum of 75,600 instructional minutes.*

## Exam Early Release Days

Dec 15-20, May 15-18

## DISTRICT HOLIDAYS

Labor Day	Sep 5
Columbus Day	Oct 10
Thanksgiving	Nov 21-25
Christmas	Dec 21-Jan 6
Bad Weather Day	Feb 13, Apr 10
Spring Break	Mar 13-17

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

<b>District Staff Development</b>	Aug 1-3, Oct 7, Jan 23 Feb 24, May 22-25
<b>Campus Staff Development</b>	Aug 4, Nov 18

## TEACHER WORKDAYS

Aug 5, Jan 9, May 19

## ASSESSMENT DAYS

STAAR, AP & IB Assessment Days

## New Teacher Academy

July 28-29

July 2022						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August 2022						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

September 2022						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

October 2022						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

November 2022						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

December 2022						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

January 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

March 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

April 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

May 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

June 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

South Texas ISD Board of Directors approved on December 8, 2021.

100 Med High Drive, Mercedes, TX 78570 • (956) 565-2454 • www.stisd.net

## Helpful Contacts

From time to time, employees have questions or concerns. If those questions or concerns cannot be answered by supervisors or at the campus or department level, the employee is encouraged to contact the appropriate department as listed below.

Business and Finance 514-4222  
Instructional Technology 514-4277  
Child Nutrition 514-4230  
Payroll 514-4215  
Facilities/Maintenance 514-4211  
Special Education 514-4244  
Human Resources 514-4224  
Technology Purchasing 514-4280  
Insurance 514-4215  
Transportation 514-4240

## School Directory

South Texas Independent School District Administration Building  
100 Med High Drive Mercedes, Texas 78570  
Phone: 956-565-2454 Fax: 956-565-4639

Campus Principal Phone / Fax

South Texas ISD Rising Scholars Academy  
Dr. Reynaldo Rodriguez  
399-4331 / 399-4358  
151 S. Helen Moore Rd.  
San Benito, Texas 78586

South Texas ISD Medical Professions  
Criselda Flores 214 -6104 / 565-6100  
10650 N. Expressway 77/83  
Olmiteo, Texas 78575

South Texas ISD World Scholars  
Dr. Cynthia Chairez  
318-8504 / 318-8500  
510 S. Sugar Rd.  
Edinburg, Texas 78539

South Texas ISD Health Professions  
Marcos Flores  
574-3004 / 574-3000  
700 Med High Drive  
Mercedes, Texas 78570

South Texas ISD Preparatory Academy  
Marco A. Zamora  
381-2604 / 381-5522  
724 S. Sugar Rd.  
Edinburg, Texas 78539

South Texas ISD Science Academy  
Eric Gutierrez 982-6304 / 982-6300  
900 Med High Drive  
Mercedes, Texas 78570

South Texas ISD Virtual Academy  
Maribel Valdez  
514-2454  
300 Med High Drive Mercedes, Texas 78570

## **Employment**

### **Equal Employment Opportunity Policies DAA, DIA**

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, South Texas ISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, or on any other basis prohibited by law.) Additionally, the district does not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to a discriminatory employment practice. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not discriminate on the basis of sex and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the district's Title IX coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the Title IX coordinator for employees to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment: [Lissa Frausto, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, 100 Med High Drive, Mercedes, TX 78570, lissa.frausto@stisd.net, and 956-514-4225]. Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, email, or phone. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator for employees for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: [Lissa Frausto, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, 100 Med High Drive, Mercedes, TX 78570, lissa.frausto@stisd.net, and 956-514-4225].

Questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any other reason should be directed to the Superintendent.

### **Job Vacancy Announcements Policy DC**

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the district's Web site [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net).

### **Employment after Retirement Policy DC**

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed in limited circumstances on a full- or part-time basis without affecting their benefits, according to TRS rules and state law. Detailed information about employment after retirement is available in the TRS publication *Employment After Retirement*. Employees can contact TRS for additional information by calling 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400.

Information is also available on the TRS Web Site ([www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov)).

## **Contract and Noncontract Employment Policy DC series**

State law requires the district to employ all full-time professional employees in positions requiring a certificate from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and nurses under probationary, term, or continuing contracts.

Employees in all other positions are employed at-will or by a contract that is not subject to the procedures for nonrenewal or termination under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. The paragraphs that follow provide a general description of the employment arrangements used by the district.

**Probationary Contracts.** Nurses and full-time professional employees new to the district and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive a probationary contract during their first year of employment. Former employees who are hired after a two-year lapse in district employment or employees who move to a position requiring a new class of certification may also be employed by probationary contract. Probationary contracts are one-year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district may not exceed one school year.

For those with less experience, the probationary period will be three school years (i.e., three one-year contracts) with an optional fourth school year if the board determines it is doubtful whether a term or continuing contract should be given.

**Term Contracts.** Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification and nurses will be employed by term contracts after they have successfully completed the probationary period. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract

**Noncertified Professional and Administrative Employees.** Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as noninstructional administrators) are employed by a one-year contract that is not subject to the provisions for nonrenewal or termination under the Texas Education Code.

**Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees.** All paraprofessional and auxiliary employees, regardless of certification, are employed at will and not by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

## **Certification and Licenses Policies DBA, DF**

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to Human Resources office in a timely manner. Employees licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR) must notify Human Resources when there are actions against, or revocation of, their license.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact Human Resources office if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

### **Recertification of Employment Authorization Policy DC**

At the time of hire, all employees must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) and present documents to verify identity and employment authorization.

Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization, or employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact Human Resources if you have any questions regarding reverification of employment authorization.

### **Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing Policy CQ, DHE**

Non-investigatory searches in the workplace including accessing an employee's desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable. Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no legitimate expectation of privacy in those places. In addition, the district reserves the right to conduct searches when there is reasonable cause to believe a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct. Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The district may search the employee, the employee's personal items, and work areas including district-owned technology resources, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work sites or used in district business.

**Employees Required to Have a Commercial Driver's License.** Any employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to drug and alcohol testing. This includes all drivers who operate a motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people counting the driver, drivers of large vehicles, or drivers of vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements if their duties include driving a commercial motor vehicle.

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted following accidents. Return-to-duty and follow-up testing will be conducted if an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs is allowed to return to duty.

All employees required to have a CDL or who otherwise are subject to alcohol and drug testing will receive a copy of the district's policy, the testing requirements, and detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse and the availability of assistance programs.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact the Transportation Coordinator or Human Resources.

### **Health Safety Training Policies DBA, DMA**

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, University Interscholastic League, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to their supervisor by the first day of school.

School nurses and employees with regular contact with students must complete a Texas Education Agency approved, online training regarding seizure disorder awareness, recognition, and related first aid.

### **Reassignments and Transfers Policy DK**

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the superintendent or designee when the superintendent or designee determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the district. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract.

Campus reassignments must be approved by the principal at the receiving campus except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time unless an extracurricular or supplemental duty assignment is part of a dual-assignment contract. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the district process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and district policy DGBA (Local).

Any employee may request reassignment within the District to another position for which he or she is qualified by applying for the position.

Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by Human Resources and approved by the superintendent and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

### **Workload and Work Schedules Policies DEA,DK, DL**

**Professional Employees.** Professional employees and academic administrators are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-, 11-, or 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by the district. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules including start and end dates and scheduled holidays will be distributed each school year.

Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation including conferences. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level but must provide at least 450 minutes within each two-week period in blocks not less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. Teachers and librarians are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes. The district may require teachers to supervise students during lunch one day a week when no other personnel are available.

**Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees.** Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees are not exempt from overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor.

### **Absenteeism and Tardiness**

While absences may occur for legitimate reasons such as sickness or important personal problems, false or unrealistic excuses are not acceptable. Employees who will be late or absent are expected to call as far in advance of starting time as possible, to state why they will be absent and when they will return to work. This provides the principal/administrator time to take necessary steps to rearrange work assignments or secure a substitute where applicable. Every employee is expected to report an absence from work in accordance with the rules and procedures in effect at his/her school/department. Failure to adhere to established reporting rules and procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The following guidelines will be used for handling excessive absences or tardiness. In determining whether an employee has been absent or tardy an excessive number of times, the following definitions may apply:

#### **Tardiness:**

Any employee arriving ten (10) minutes after his/her scheduled starting time may be considered tardy.

#### **Excessive Tardiness:**

Any three (3) occurrences of tardiness within a thirty (30) day period.

**Absence:** Any employee who is not present at his/her work assignment during any scheduled work period may be considered absent for that period.

#### **Excessive Absenteeism:**

Excessive absenteeism and turnover are expensive, disruptive, and places an unfair burden upon other employees. Any three (3) separate occurrences of absence within a thirty (30) day period may be considered excessive. The supervisor shall review reasons for absences. The supervisor may issue a written notice outlining concerns and/or a conference may be requested.

### **Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk Policies DEAB, DG**

The district supports the practice of expressing breast milk and makes reasonable accommodations for the needs of employees who express breast milk. A place, other than a multiple user bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion where the employee can express breast milk will be provided.



A reasonable amount of break time will be provided when the employee has a need to express milk. For nonexempt employees, these breaks are unpaid and are not counted as hours worked. Employees should meet with their supervisor to discuss their needs and arrange break times.

### **Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications Policies DK, DBA**

In schools receiving Title I funds, the district is required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. ESSA also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements.

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notification under ESSA is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call State Board for Educator Certification at (512) 936- 8400.

### **Outside Employment and Tutoring Policy DBD**

Employees are required to disclose in writing to their immediate supervisor any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of the district. Supervisors will consider outside employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

### **Performance Evaluation Policy DN series**

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continuous process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually. Written evaluations will be completed on forms approved by the district. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda also can be used to document performance information. All employees will receive a copy of their written evaluation, participate in a performance conference with their supervisor, and have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

Upon receiving a report, a nursing review committee may review a nurse's nursing services, qualifications, and quality of patient care, as well as the merits of a complaint concerning a nurse, and a determination or recommendation regarding a complaint. A nurse may request, orally or in writing, a determination by the committee regarding conduct requested of the nurse believed to violate the nurse's duty to a patient.

### **Employee Involvement Policies BQA, BQB**

At both the campus and district levels, South Texas ISD offers opportunities for input

in matters that affect employees and influence the instructional effectiveness of the district. As part of the district's planning and decision-making process, employees are elected to serve on district- or campus-level advisory committees. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision-making process are available in each campus office.

## **Staff Development Policy DMA**

Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the district. Staff development for instructional personnel is predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, addressed in the campus improvement plan, and approved by a campus-level advisory committee. Staff development for noninstructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g., bus drivers) and continued employee skill development.

Individuals holding renewable SBEC certificates are responsible for obtaining the required training hours and maintaining appropriate documentation.

## **Compensation and Benefits**

### **Salaries, Wages, and Stipends Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB**

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law.

Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as non-exempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See Overtime Compensation, page 19.)

All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules before the start of each school year. Classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time nurses, and full-time counselors will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the district's extra-duty pay schedule.

Employees should contact the Payroll Office for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

### **Paychecks**

All professional and salaried employees are paid monthly every 20th of the month. Hourly employees are paid every two weeks. An employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of leave accumulated.

### **Automatic Payroll Deposit**

Employees will have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of 30 days is necessary to activate this service. Contact the Payroll office (514- 4215) for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

## **Payroll Deductions Policy CFEA**

The district is required to make the following automatic payroll deductions:

- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) or Social Security employee contributions
- Federal income tax required for all full-time employees
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986)
- Child support and spousal maintenance, if applicable
- Delinquent federal education loan payments, if applicable

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for health, dental, life, and vision insurance; annuities; and higher education savings plans. Employees also may request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

## **Overtime Compensation Policy DEA**

The district compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. Only nonexempt employees (hourly employees and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Nonexempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor and Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. A nonexempt employee who works overtime without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action.

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40- hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins on Sunday at 12 A.M. and ends on Saturday at 11:59 P.M.

Employees may be compensated for overtime at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 hours of comp time.
- Comp time must be used in the duty year that it is earned.
- Use of comp time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval, as workload permits, or at the supervisor's direction.
- An employee may be required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

## **Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy DEE**

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor must give approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by the district. Employees must submit receipts, to the extent possible, to be reimbursed for expenses other than mileage.

### **Health, Dental, and Life Insurance Policy CRD**

Group health insurance coverage is provided through TRS-Active Care, the statewide public school employee health insurance program. The district's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the board of trustees. Employees eligible for health insurance coverage include the following:

- Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
- Employees who are not contributing TRS members and who are regularly scheduled to work at least 10 hours per week

TRS retirees who are enrolled in TRS-Care (retiree health insurance program) and employees who are not contributing TRS members who are regularly scheduled to work less than 10 hours per week, are not eligible to participate in TRS-Active Care.

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each spring. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact Payroll office for more information.

### **Supplemental Insurance Benefits Policy CRD**

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Payroll office for more information.

### **Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)**

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis (i.e., disability, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer and dread disease, dental, and additional term life insurance). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.

New employees must accept or reject this benefit during their first month of employment. All employees must accept or reject this benefit on an annual basis and during the specified time period.

### **Workers' Compensation Insurance Policy CRE**

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from Texas Political of Subdivisions, effective September 1, 2019.

Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case.

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to your supervisor and the Business office. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. (See Workers' Compensation Benefits, page 28 for information on use of paid leave for such absences.)

### **Unemployment Compensation Insurance Policy CRF**

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have employment contracts or reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact the Human Resources office.

### **Teacher Retirement Policy DEG**

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four and one-half months are members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). Substitute Teachers not receiving TRS service retirement benefits who work at least 90 days a year are also eligible for TRS membership and to purchase a year of creditable service. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the Payroll office as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web ([www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)). See page 19 for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

### **Leaves and Absences Policies DEC, DECA, DECB**

The district offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence.

Employees who expect to be absent for an extended period of more than three days should call Human Resources office for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums, and requirements for communicating with the district.

Leave must be used in half-day increments. However, if an employee is taking family and medical leave, leave shall be recorded in one-hour increments. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state and local leave. Available leave shall be used in the order determined by each employee's signed absence from duty report. Use of extended sick leave or donated leave days shall be permitted only after

all available state and local leave have been exhausted.

Employees must follow district and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate form or certification. Any unapproved absences or absences beyond accumulated or available paid leave shall result in deduction from the employee's pay.

**Immediate Family.** For purposes of leave other than family and medical leave, immediate family is defined as the following:

- Spouse
- Son or daughter, including a biological, adopted, or foster child, a son- or daughter-in-law, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis.
- Parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, or other individual who stands in loco parentis to the employee.
- Sibling, stepsibling, and sibling-in-law
- Grandparent and grandchild
- Any person residing in the employee's household at the time of illness or death

For purposes of family and medical leave, the definition of family is limited to spouse, parent, son or daughter, and next of kin. The definition of these are found in Policy DECA(LEGAL).

**Medical Certification.** Any employee who is absent more than 3 days because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and—in the case of personal illness—the employee's fitness to return to work.

The district may require medical certification due to an employee's questionable pattern of absences or when deemed necessary by the supervisor or superintendent. The district may also request medical certification when an employee requests FMLA leave for the employee's serious health condition, a serious health condition of the employee's spouse, parent, or child, or for military caregiver leave.

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) prohibits covered employers from requesting or requiring genetic information of an individual or family member of the individual, except as specifically allowed by this law. To comply with this law, we ask that employees and health care providers do not provide any genetic information in any medical certification. 'Genetic information,' as defined by GINA, includes an individual's family medical history, the results of an individual's or family member's genetic tests, the fact that an individual or an individual's family member sought or received genetic services, and genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or an individual's family member or an embryo lawfully held by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services.

**Continuation of Health Insurance.** Employees on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the district as they were prior to the leave. Otherwise, the district does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave. Under TRS-Active Care rules, an employee is no longer eligible for insurance through the district after six months of unpaid leave other than FML. If an employee's unpaid leave extends for more than six months, the district will provide the employee with notice of COBRA rights.

## **Personal Leave**

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts, and generally transfers to education service centers. Personal leave may be used for two general purposes: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

**Nondiscretionary.** Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. Reasons for this type of leave allow very little, if any, advance planning. Nondiscretionary may be used in the same manner as state sick leave.

**Discretionary.** Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a written request to the immediate supervisor or designee in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor. Discretionary use of state personal leave shall not exceed three consecutive workdays.

**Leave Proration.** If an employee separates from employment with the district before his or her last duty day of the year, or begins employment after the first duty day, state personal leave will be prorated based on the actual time employed. When an employee separates from employment before the last duty day of the school year, the employee's final paycheck will be reduced by the amount of state personal leave the employee used beyond his or her pro rata entitlement for the school year.

## **State Sick Leave**

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State sick leave can be used only in ½ or full day increments, except when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis or when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

State sick leave may be used for the following reasons only:

- Employee illness
- Illness in the employee's immediate family
- Family emergency (i.e., natural disasters or life-threatening situations)
- Death in the immediate family
- Active military service

## **Local Leave**

All employees shall earn five workdays of paid local leave per school year, at a rate of one-half workday for each month of employment. Local leave shall accumulate without limit. Local leave shall be used according to the terms and conditions of state sick leave accumulated before 1995- 96 school year.

## **Extended Sick Leave**

After all available paid leave days and any applicable compensatory time have been exhausted, an employee shall be granted in a school year a maximum of 15 leave days of extended sick leave to be used for the employee's personal illness or injury, including pregnancy-related illness or injury, or for absences related to the illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family.

This extended sick leave benefit shall only be granted once in a school year. To be eligible for extended sick leave, the employee shall have been absent at least three consecutive workdays.

A written request for extended sick leave must be accompanied by medical certification of the illness or injury.

The District shall deduct the average daily rate of pay of a substitute for the employee's position for each day of extended sick leave taken, whether or not a substitute is employed.

### **Vacation Policy DED Local**

Year-round, full-time (260) employees will be entitled to 10 days paid vacation after one year of employment with the district as per approval of the supervisor. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a written request to the immediate supervisor or designee in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor.

### **Sick Leave Pool**

The District's sick leave pool shall be established from voluntary donations by the District staff to assist a fellow employee suffering from a catastrophic personal illness or injury. To receive days from the pool, the requesting employee must first use all of his or her paid leave benefits, including state and local sick leave, extended sick leave, state personal leave, vacation, and nonduty days. The employee may participate in the pool until he or she has used 50 days from the pool. A request for the establishment of a sick leave pool shall be made in writing to the administrator-in-charge or supervisor. The Superintendent shall authorize the initiation of a sick leave pool for the employee and notify District staff, pending certification of a catastrophic illness.

### **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—General Provisions**

The following text is from the federal notice, Employee Rights and Responsibilities Under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Specific information that the district has adopted to implement the FMLA follows this general notice.

### **Leave Entitlements**

Eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:

- The birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- To bond with a child (Leave must be taken within 1 year of the child's birth or placement);
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a qualifying serious health condition;
- For the employee's own qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job;
- For qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military member who is the employee's spouse, child, or parent.

An eligible employee who is a covered servicemember's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may also take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

An employee does not need to use leave in one block. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, employees may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule.



Employees may choose, or an employer may require, use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. If an employee substitutes accrued paid leave for FMLA leave, the employee must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

### **Benefits and Protections**

While employees are on FMLA leave, employers must continue health insurance coverage as if the employees were not on leave.

Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to the same job or one nearly identical to it with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

An employer may not interfere with an individual's FMLA rights or retaliate against someone for using or trying to use FMLA leave, opposing any practice made un-lawful by the FMLA, or being involved in any proceeding under or related to the FMLA.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

An employee who works for a covered employer must meet three criteria in order to be eligible for FMLA leave. The employee must:

- Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months;
- Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before taking leave\*, and
- Work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.

\*Special hours of service eligibility requirements apply to airline flight crew employees.

### **Requesting Leave**

Generally, employees must give 30-days' advance notice of the need for FMLA leave. If it is not possible to give 30-days' notice, an employee must notify the employer as soon as possible and, generally, follow the employer's usual procedures.

Employees do not have to share a medical diagnosis but must provide enough information to the employer so it can determine if the leave qualifies for FMLA protection.

Sufficient information could include informing an employer that the employee is or will be unable to perform his or her job functions, that a family member cannot perform daily activities, or that hospitalization or continuing medical treatment is necessary. Employees must inform the employer if the need for leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Employers can require a certification or periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. If the employer determines that the certification is incomplete, it must provide a written notice indicating what additional information is required.

### **Employer Responsibilities**

Once an employer becomes aware that an employee's need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, the employer must notify the employee if he or she is eligible for FMLA leave and, if eligible, must also provide a notice of rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. If the employee is not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for ineligibility.

Employers must notify its employees if leave will be designated as FMLA leave, and if so, how much leave will be designated as FMLA leave.

### **Enforcement**

Employees may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supercede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

For additional information:

1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627

[www.wagehour.dol.gov](http://www.wagehour.dol.gov)

### **Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions**

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period beginning on the first duty day of the school year.

**Use of Paid Leave.** FML runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, compensatory time, assault leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The district will designate the leave as FML, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

**Combined Leave for Spouses.** A husband and wife who are both employed by the district are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of FML to care for a parent with a serious health condition; or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. Military caregiver leave for spouses is limited to a combined total of 26 weeks.

**Intermittent Leave.** When medically necessary or in the case of a qualifying exigency, an employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule. The district does not permit the use of intermittent or reduced-schedule leave for the care of a newborn child or for adoption or placement of a child with the employee.

**Fitness for Duty.** An employee that takes FML due to the employee's own serious health condition shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification from the health care provider. When leave is taken for the employee's own serious health condition, the certification must address the employee's ability to perform essential job functions. The district shall provide a list of essential job functions (e.g., job description) to the employee with the FML designation notice to share with the health care provider. Fitness for duty is not required when an employee returns to work following leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition; to care for a child following birth, adoption, or foster care placement; or for qualifying exigency leave.

**Reinstatement.** An employee returning to work at the end of FML will be returned to the same position held when the leave began or to an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

In certain cases, instructional employees desiring to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue on family and medical leave until the end of the semester. The additional time off is not counted against the employee's FML entitlement, and the district will maintain the employees group health insurance and reinstate the employee at the end of the leave according the procedures outlined in policy (see DECA(LEGAL)).

**Failure to Return.** If, at the expiration of FML, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the district may require the employee to reimburse the district's share of insurance premiums paid during any portion of FML when the employee was on unpaid leave. If the employee fails to return to work for a reason beyond the employee's control, such as a continuing personal or family serious health

condition or a spouse being unexpectedly transferred more than 75 miles from the district, the district may not require the employee to reimburse the district's share of premiums paid.

**District Contact.** Employees that require FML or have questions should contact Human Resources office for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

### **Temporary Disability Leave**

**Certified Employees.** Any full-time employee whose position requires certification from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) is eligible for temporary disability leave. The purpose of temporary disability leave is to provide job protection to full-time educators who cannot work for an extended period of time because of a mental or physical disability of a temporary nature.

Temporary disability leave must be taken as a continuous block of time. It may not be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule. Pregnancy and conditions related to pregnancy are treated the same as any other temporary disability.

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. An employee's notification of need for extended absence due to the employee's own medical condition shall be accepted as a request for temporary disability leave. The request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days.

If an employee is placed on temporary disability leave involuntarily, he or she has the right to request a hearing before the board of trustees. The employee may protest the action and present additional evidence of fitness to work.

When an employee is ready to return to work, the Superintendent should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to resume regular duties. Certified employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned if an appropriate position is available. If an appropriate position is not available, the employee may be assigned to another campus, subject to the approval of the campus principal. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, the employee will be reinstated to a position at the original campus at the beginning of the following school year.

### **Workers' Compensation Benefits**

An employee absent from duty because of a job-related illness or injury may be eligible for workers' compensation weekly income benefits if the absence exceeds seven calendar days.

An employee receiving workers' compensation wage benefits for a job-related illness or injury may choose to use accumulated sick leave or any other paid leave benefits. An employee choosing to use paid leave will not receive workers' compensation weekly income benefits until all paid leave is exhausted or to the extent that paid leave does not equal the pre-illness or -injury wage. If the use of paid leave is not elected, then the employee will only receive workers' compensation wage benefits for any absence resulting from a work-related illness or injury, which may not equal his or her pre-illness or injury wage.

### **Assault Leave**

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person non-responsible for purposes of criminal liability.

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. At the request of an employee, the district will immediately assign the employee to assault leave. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave and must be coordinated with workers' compensation benefits. Upon investigation the district may change the assault leave status and charge leave used against the employee's accrued paid leave. The employee's pay will be deducted if accrued paid leave is not available.

### **Bereavement Leave**

An employee shall be granted three days of bereavement leave upon the death of a member of the employee's immediate family. Such leave shall be taken with no loss of pay or other paid leave.

### **Jury Duty**

#### **Policies DEC, DG**

The district provides paid leave to employees who are summoned to jury duty including service on a grand jury. The district will not discharge, threaten to discharge, intimidate, or coerce any regular employee because of juror or grand juror service or for the employee's attendance or scheduled attendance in connection with the service in any court in the United States. Employees who report to the court for jury duty may keep any compensation the court provides. An employee should report a summons for jury duty to his or her supervisor as soon as it is received and may be required to provide the district a copy of the summons to document the need for leave.

An employee may be required to report back to work as soon as they are released from jury duty. The supervisor may consider the travel time required and the nature of the individual's position when determining the need to report to work. A copy of the release from jury duty or documentation of time spent at the court may be required.

### **Other Court Appearances**

Absences due to compliance with a valid subpoena or for jury duty shall be fully compensated by the District and shall not be deducted from the employee's pay or leave balance.

Absences for court appearances related to an employee's personal business shall be deducted from the employee's leave or, at the option of the employee, shall be taken as leave without pay.

### **Religious Observance**

The district will reasonably accommodate an employee's request for absence for a religious holiday or observance. Accommodations such as changes to work schedules or approving a day of absence will be made unless they pose an undue hardship to

the district. The employee may use any accumulated personal leave for this purpose. Employees who have exhausted applicable paid leave may be granted an unpaid day of absence.

## **Military Leave**

**Paid Leave for Military Service.** Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized Urban Search and Rescue Team is entitled to paid leave for authorized training or duty orders. Paid military leave is limited to 15 days each federal fiscal year (October 1–September 30). In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service.

**Reemployment after Military Leave.** Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment within the time specified by law to the Superintendent. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years.

**Continuation of Health Insurance.** Employees who perform service in the uniformed services may elect to continue their health plan coverage at their own cost for a period not to exceed 24 months. Employees should contact the payroll office for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **Payment for Accumulated Leave Upon Death**

The estate or beneficiary of an employee who has at least five years of service with the District and who dies while employed by the District shall receive payment for the employee's accumulated state and local leave.

The employee's estate or beneficiary shall receive payment for each day of accumulated state and local leave, to a maximum of 50 days, at a rate equal to the employee's daily rate of pay at the time of death. The total payment shall not exceed \$50,000.

## **Payment for Accumulated Leave Upon Retirement**

An employee who retires from the District shall be eligible for payment for accumulated state and local leave under the following conditions:

1. The employee's retirement is voluntary, i.e., the employee is not being discharged or nonrenewed.
2. The employee is retiring under the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS).
3. The employee provides advance written notice of intent to retire. Contract employees must provide written notice at least 60 days before the last day of employment. Noncontract employees must provide written notice at least two

weeks before the last day of employment.

4. The employee has at least five years of consecutive service with the District.

The employee shall receive payment for each day of accumulated state and local leave, at the employee's daily rate of pay at the time of retirement. If the employee is reemployed with the District, days for which the employee received payment shall not be available to that employee.

## **Employee Relations and Communications**

### **Employee Recognition and Appreciation**

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities also include congratulatory e-mails and media outreach.

### **District Communications**

Throughout the school year, the Public Relations & Marketing Department publishes newsletters, brochures, flyers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements. The district website-[www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net) – and social media (including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube) are also used to share information about the district and campus happenings and to feature achievements and interesting stories.

### **Complaints and Grievances**

#### **Policy DGBA**

In an effort to hear and resolve employee concerns or complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted an orderly grievance process.

Employees are encouraged to discuss their concerns or complaints with their supervisors or an appropriate administrator at any time.

The formal process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, employees can bring concerns or complaints to the board of trustees. For ease of reference, the district's policy concerning the process of bringing concerns and complaints is reprinted as follows:

#### **DGBA (LOCAL) Formal Process**

If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the employee, he or she may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form. Even after initiating the formal complaint process, employees are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. An employee whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time. The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or "mini-trial" at any level.

## **Employee Conduct and Welfare**

### **Standards of Conduct**

## Policy DH

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the district and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. Employees are expected to observe the following standards of conduct:

- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action.
- Know and comply with department and district policies and procedures.
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use district time, funds, and property for authorized district business and activities only.

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the superintendent first learns of the incident. See Reports to the Texas Education Agency, page 49 for additional information.

The Educators' Code of Ethics, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, which all district employees must adhere to, is reprinted below:

### **Texas Educators' Code of Ethics**

#### **Statement of Purpose**

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. (19 TAC 247.1(b))

### **Texas Educators' Code of Ethics**

#### **Purpose and Scope**

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator,

in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification. (19 TAC §247.1(b))

Enforceable Standards

### **1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance**

Standard 1.1 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and its certification process.

Standard 1.2 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

Standard 1.3 The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

Standard 1.4 The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

Standard 1.5 The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or that are used to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

Standard 1.6 The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

Standard 1.7 The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.

Standard 1.8 The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.

Standard 1.9 The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.

Standard 1.10 The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.

Standard 1.11 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.

Standard 1.12 The educator shall refrain from the illegal use, abuse, or distribution of controlled substances, prescription drugs, and toxic inhalants.

Standard 1.13 The educator shall not be under the influence of alcohol or consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

### **2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues**

Standard 2.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 2.2 The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

Standard 2.3 The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

Standard 2.4 The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Standard 2.5 The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.

Standard 2.6 The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment



in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

Standard 2.7 The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

Standard 2.8 The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly subject a colleague to sexual harassment.

### **3. Ethical Conduct toward Students**

Standard 3.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 3.2 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.

Standard 3.3 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

Standard 3.4 The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.

Standard 3.5 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.

Standard 3.6 The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.

Standard 3.7 The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

Standard 3.8 The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.

Standard 3.9 The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication.

Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

- (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
- (ii) the subject matter of the communication;
- (iii) whether the communication was made openly, or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
- (iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
- (v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
- (vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

### **Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policies DH, DIA**

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees, unpaid interns, student teachers, or students. While acting in

the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment of other persons including board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. A substantiated charge of harassment will result in disciplinary action.

Individuals who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against or harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor, or appropriate district official. If the campus principal, supervisor, or district official is the subject of a complaint, the complaint should be made directly to the superintendent. A complaint against the superintendent may be made directly to the board.

Any district employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, or believes that another employee has experienced such prohibited conduct, should immediately report the alleged acts. The employee may report the alleged acts to his or her supervisor, the campus principal, the Title IX coordinator, or the superintendent. The district's Title IX coordinator's name and contact information is listed in the Equal Employment Opportunity section of this handbook.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation is below:

[DIA\(LOCAL\)](#) and [DIA \(REGULATION\)](#) link to Policy Online here.

### **Harassment of Students Policies DF, DH, FFG, FFH**

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited.

Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. Any district employee who suspects or receives direct or indirect notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, of a student shall immediately notify the district's Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, or superintendent and take any other steps required by district policy.

All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect occurred must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. See Reporting Suspected Child Abuse, page 35 and Bullying, page 52 for additional information.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students is below:

[DHB\(Legal\)](#), [FFH\(Local\)](#), [FFH\(Regulation\)](#) link to Policy Online here.

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse Policies DG, FFG, GRA**

All employees with reasonable cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health

or welfare has been adversely affected by or neglect, as defined by Texas Family Code §261.001, are required by state law to make a report to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services (CPS), or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering the facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Alleged abuse or neglect involving a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child (including a teacher) must be reported to CPS.

Employees are also required to make a report if they have reasonable cause to believe that an adult was a victim of abuse or neglect as a child and they determine in good faith that the disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of another child, elderly person, or person with a disability.

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made Online at <https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx> or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person or administrator to make the report.

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the district is prohibited from taking an adverse employment action against a certified or licensed professional who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

An employee's failure to make the required report may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. The offense of failure to report by a professional may be a state jail felony if it is shown the individual intended to conceal the abuse or neglect.

In addition, a certified employee's failure to report may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agency.

Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report it to the appropriate state agency. In addition, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and neglect. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

### **Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children**

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at (insert link to the District Improvement Plan here). As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or maltreated. 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. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to

Child Protective Services (CPS).

Employees are required to follow the procedures described above in Reporting Suspected Child Abuse.

### **Reporting Crime Policy DG**

The Texas Whistleblower Act protects district employees who make good faith reports of violations of law by the district to an appropriate law enforcement authority. The district is prohibited from suspending, terminating the employment of, or taking other adverse personnel action against, an employee who makes a report under the Act. State law also provides employees with the right to report a crime witnessed at the school to any peace officer with authority to investigate the crime.

### **Scope and Sequence Policy DG**

If a teacher determines that students need more or less time in a specific area to demonstrate proficiency in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for that subject and grade level, the district will not penalize the teacher for not following the district's scope and sequence.

The district may take appropriate action if a teacher does not follow the district's scope and sequence based on documented evidence of a deficiency in classroom instruction. This documentation can be obtained through observation or substantiated and documented third-party information.

### **Technology Resources Policy CQ**

The district's technology resources, including its network access to the Internet, are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

- Imposes no tangible cost to the district.
- Does not unduly burden the district's computer or network resources
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance?

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the technology resources are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use.

Employees who are authorized to use the system are required to abide by the provisions of the acceptable use policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact Technology department.

### **Personal Use of Electronic Communications Policy CQ, DH**

Electronic communications includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing web sites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic communications also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.

As role models for the district's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic communications as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic communications interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for Weblinks on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

An employee who uses electronic media for personal purposes shall observe the following: The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment.

·The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, mealtimes, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct district business.

·The employee shall not use the district's logo or other copyrighted material of the district without express, written consent.

·An employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on district business unless the employee first obtains written approval from the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy concerns.

·The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:

Confidentiality of student records. [See Policy FL]

- Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]
- Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses. [See Policy GBA]
- Copyright law [See Policy CY]
- Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]

See Use of Electronic Communications between Employees, Students, and Parents, below for regulations on employee communication with students through electronic media.

### **Use of Electronic Communications between Employees, Students, and Parents Policy DH**

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the superintendent or a campus principal, may communicate through electronic communications with students who are currently enrolled in the district. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. Electronic communications between all other employees and students who are enrolled in the district are prohibited.

Employees are not required to provide students with their personal phone number or email address.

An employee is not subject to these provisions regarding electronic communications with a student to the extent the employee has a social or family relationship with a student. For example, an employee may have a relationship with a niece or nephew, a student who is the child of an adult friend, a student who is a friend of the employee's child, or a member or participant in the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization. An employee who claims an exception based on a social relationship shall provide written consent from the student's parent. The written consent shall include an acknowledgement by the parent that:

- The employee has provided the parent with a copy of this protocol;
- The employee and student have a social relationship outside of school;
- The parent understands that the employee's communications with the student are excepted from district regulation; and
- The parent is solely responsible for monitoring electronic communications between the employee and the student.

The following definitions apply for the use of electronic media with students:

- Electronic communications means any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes email, text messages, instant messages, and any communication made through an Internet website, including a social media website or a social networking web-site.
- Communicate means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a communication; however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See Personal Use of Electronic Communications, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a communication.
- Certified or licensed employee means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.
- An employee who communicates electronically with students shall observe the following:
  - The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students using any form of electronic communications, including mobile and web applications, that are not provided or accessible by the district unless a specific exception is noted below.
  - Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility. An employee who communicates with a student using text messaging shall comply with the following protocol:
    - The employee shall include at least one of the student's parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message.
    - The employee shall include his or her immediate supervisor as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and supervisor receive the same message.

- For each text message addressed to one or more students, the employee shall send a copy of the text message to the employee's district email address.
- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page ("professional page") for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee's professional page.
- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time .
- An employee may make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, including:
  - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
  - Copyright law [Policy CY]
  - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DH]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently-enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.
- An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.

## **Criminal History Background Checks Policy DBAA**

Employees may be subject to a review of their criminal history record information at any time during employment. National criminal history checks based on an individual's fingerprints, photo, and other identification will be conducted on certain employees and entered into the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Clearinghouse. This database provides the district and SBEC with access to an employee's current national criminal history and updates to the employee's subsequent criminal history.

## **Employee Arrests and Convictions Policy DH**

An employee must notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of any felony, and any of the other offenses listed below:

- Crimes involving school property or funds
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity
- Crimes involving moral turpitude Moral turpitude includes the following:
  - Dishonesty
  - Fraud
  - Deceit
  - Theft
  - Misrepresentation
  - Deliberate violence
  - Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor
- Crimes involving any felony possession or conspiracy to possess, or any misdemeanor or felony transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance
- Felonies involving driving while intoxicated (DWI) or driving under the influence (DUI) of drugs or alcohol
- Acts constituting abuse or neglect under the SBEC rules

If an educator is arrested or criminally charged, the superintendent is also required to report the educators' criminal history to the Division of Investigations at TEA.

**Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention Policies DH, DI**

South Texas ISD is committed to maintaining an alcohol- and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed. The district's policy regarding employee drug use follows:

[DH \(Local\)](#) and [DI \(Exhibit\)](#) links to Policy Online here.

**Tobacco Products and E-Cigarette Use Policies DH, FNCD GKA**

State law prohibits smoking or using tobacco products, or e-cigarettes on all district-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off campus. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. Drivers of district-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking while inside the vehicle. Notices stating that smoking is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine are displayed in prominent places in all school buildings.

**Fraud and Financial Impropriety Policy CAA**

All employees should act with integrity and diligence in duties involving the district's financial resources. The district prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, as defined below. Fraud and financial impropriety include the following:



- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district

**Conflict of Interest  
Policy DBD**

Employees are required to disclose to their supervisor any situation that creates a potential conflict of interest with proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interests of the district. This includes the following:

- A personal financial interest
- A business interests
- Any other obligation or relationship
- Non-school employment

**Gifts and Favors  
Policy DBD**

Employees may not accept gifts or favors that could influence, or be construed to influence, the employee's discharge of assigned duties. The acceptance of a gift, favor, or service by an administrator or teacher that might reasonably tend to influence the selection of textbooks, electronic textbooks, instructional materials or technological equipment may result in prosecution of a Class B misdemeanor offense. This does not include staff development, teacher training, or instructional materials such as maps or worksheets that convey information to students or contribute to the learning process.

**Copyrighted Materials  
Policy EFE**

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of federal copyright law relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance, or display of copyrighted materials (i.e., printed material, videos, computer data and programs, etc.). Electronic media, including motion pictures and other audiovisual works, are to be used in the classroom for instructional purposes only. Duplication are to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or backup of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

**Associations and Political Activities  
Policy DGA**

The district will not directly or indirectly discourage employees from participating in

political affairs or require any employee to join any group, club, committee, organization, or association.

Employees may join or refuse to join any professional association or organization. An individual's employment will not be affected by membership or a decision not to be a member of any employee organization that exists for the purpose of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

Use of district resources including work time for political activities is prohibited.

### **Charitable Contributions Policy DG**

The Board or any employee may not directly or indirectly require or coerce an employee to make a contribution to a charitable organization or in response to a fund-raiser. Employees cannot be required to attend a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions. In addition, the Board or any employee may not directly or indirectly require or coerce an employee to refrain from making a contribution to a charitable organization or in response to a fund raiser or attending a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions.

### **Safety Policy CK series**

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students and to protect and conserve district equipment, employees must comply with the following requirements:

- Observe all safety rules.
- Keep work areas clean and orderly at all times.
- Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor.
- Operate only equipment or machines for which they have training and authorization.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the Administrator for Support Services office.

### **Possession of Firearms and Weapons Policies FNCG, GKA**

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a concealed handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisor or call 911 immediately.

### **Visitors in the Workplace Policy GKC**

All visitors are expected to enter any district facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the district premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

### **Asbestos Management Plan Policy CKA**

The district is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each school. A copy of the district's management plan is kept in the business office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

### **Pest Control Treatment Policies CLB, DI**

Employees are prohibited from applying any pesticide or herbicide without appropriate training and prior approval of the integrated pest management (IPM) coordinator. Any application of pesticide or herbicide must be done in a manner prescribed by law and the district's integrated pest management program.

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located at the Principal's or Director's office. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests individualized notice will be notified by telephone, written or electric means. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

### **Employee ID Badges**

Each employee shall be provided an ID badge indicating their name, title, and campus/department following the employment process. The ID badge must be worn at all times while on STISD premises. The use of the ID badge by any other person is prohibited. ID badges must be surrendered to the immediate supervisor upon termination of employment.

### **General Procedures Emergency School Closing**

The district may close schools because of severe weather, epidemics, or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late, to release students early, or to cancel school, district officials will post a notice on the district's Web site and notify the following radio and television stations:

#### **TV Stations**

KRGV- CH 5 - <https://www.krgv.com/home/>  
KGBT- CBS 4 & NBC 23- <http://www.valleycentral.com/>  
KFXV- FOX RIO 2 - <https://foxnewssouthtexas.com/>  
KNVO - Univision 48 - <https://noticiasya.com/el-valle/>

## **Radio Stations**

KTEX-FM 100.3  
KBFM-FM Wild 104.1  
KVLV 107.9  
KHKZ-FM Kiss 105.5 /106.3  
KURV 710

## **Newspapers**

The Brownsville Herald - <https://myrgv.com/>  
The Monitor - <https://myrgv.com/>  
Valley Morning Star - <https://myrgv.com/>  
San Benito News - <https://www.sbnewspaper.com/>

## **District and campus websites**

District: <https://www.stisd.net/>  
Health Professions: <https://healthprofessions.stisd.net/>  
Medical Professions: <https://medicalprofessions.stisd.net/>  
Preparatory Academy: <https://preparatoryacademy.stisd.net/>  
Rising Scholars Academy: <https://risingscholars.stisd.net/>  
Science Academy: <https://scienceacademy.stisd.net/>  
World Scholars: <https://worldscholars.stisd.net/>  
Virtual Academy: <https://virtualacademy.stisd.net/>

The full list of district and campus social media handles is also available through the district website at <https://www.stisd.net/parents/stay-connected> and within the Social Media section.

## **Emergencies**

### **Policies CKC, CKD**

All employees should be familiar with the safety procedures for responding to a medical emergency and the evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas. Emergency drills will be conducted to familiarize employees and students with safety and evacuation procedures. Each campus is equipped with an automatic external defibrillator. Fire extinguishers are located throughout all district buildings. Employees should know the location of these devices and procedures for their use.

## **Purchasing Procedures**

### **Policy CH**

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the bookkeeper/purchasing department on an official district purchase order (PO) form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without a PO number. The district will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district's business office. Contact business office for additional information on purchasing procedures.

## **Name and Address Changes**

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify

the human resources office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. The form to process a change in personal information can be found in [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net) district website.

### **Personnel Records Policy DBA, GBA**

Most district records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. In most cases, an employee's personal email address is confidential and may not be released without the employee's permission.

Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

- Address
- Phone number, including personal cell phone number
- Emergency contact information
- Information that reveals whether they have family members

The choice to not allow public access to this information or change an existing choice may be made at any time by submitting a written request to Human Resources. New or terminated employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information may be released to the public until a request to withhold the information is submitted or another exception for release of information under law applies. An employee is responsible for notifying the district if he or she is subject to any exception for disclosure of personal or confidential information.

### **Facility Use Policies DGA, GKD**

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. A request for use of a building or facility shall be cleared with the principal and submitted in writing to the Superintendent at least 30 days in advance, except in the month of December when such request shall be at least 60 days in advance. The request must state the name of the group, purpose, length of time to be used, and the date.

### **Staff Dress Code Policy DH**

An employee's dress and grooming shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for his or her assignment, and in accordance with any additional standards established by his or her supervisor and approved by the Superintendent.

#### **General Guidelines:**

- "Business casual" attire is acceptable.
- Friday denim days with appropriate jeans and an STISD sanctioned t-shirt or campus colors. Denim clothing shall be clean and neat, with no holes, no extreme fading, frayed hems, or worn-out look and not multi-toned.
- Good personal hygiene at all times.
- Neat and clean hair at all times.
- Undergarments should be worn at all times.

#### **Prohibited Attire:**

- Plain, colorless t-shirts, muscle shirts, or sleeveless t-shirts.
- Clothing that is strapless, spaghetti straps, bare midriff, cut-out backs, or having provocative/low necklines.

- Dress/skirts that are more than 4" above the knee cap; dress/skirts with slits on side, rear or front exposing 4" above the knee cap.
- Leggings in lieu of pants (including spandex).
- Denim jeans of any color (except on denim Fridays for campuses).
- Warm-ups.
- See-through apparel.
- Distracting hair color or hairstyles.
- Flip flops, slippers, or Crocs style shoes.
- Attire shall not be tight/binding.
- Tattoos (body art) considered to be offensive are unacceptable and must be covered.
- Body piercings shall not be allowed, other than on ears in a reasonable amount.
- Visible Hickeys may be considered offensive and must be covered.

### **Exceptions:**

- Physical Education staff may choose to wear appropriate attire during the physical education period.
- Teachers who have lab or shop courses may wear appropriate attire to ensure safety.
- Auxiliary employees in maintenance, custodial, transportation, food service, and positions requiring uniforms are exempted from the general guidelines, but shall comply with dress and grooming guidelines specified by their supervisors or in the department handbooks.

STISD reserves the right to determine at its discretion what is and is not appropriate workplace attire and to address issues as they arise. Grounds for termination may be considered for any employee refusing to abide by the dress requirements.

## **Termination of Employment**

### **Resignations Policy DFE, DHB**

**Contract Employees.** Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Superintendent or the persons designated by the board of trustees, which includes the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. Supervisors who have not been designated by the board to accept resignations shall instruct the employee to submit the resignation to the superintendent, or other person designated by board action.

Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the superintendent or the board of trustees. Resignation without consent may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's resignation within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in Report to Texas Education Agency on page 49. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

**Noncontract Employees.** Noncontract employees may resign their position at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to your immediate supervisor at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of a noncertified employee's resignation or termination within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct of abuse of a student or was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual conduct with a student or minor. The superintendent will notify TEA within seven business days of receiving a report from a principal, or of knowing about an employee's resignation or termination following an alleged incident of misconduct described above.

### **Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees Policies DF Series, DHB**

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be nonrenewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The timelines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee.

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's termination within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in Reports to Texas Education Agency on page . The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee is terminated and there is evidence to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when the employee's certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the timelines and procedures can be found in the DF series policies that are provided to employees or are available on line.

### **Dismissal of Noncontract Employees Policy DCD, DP**

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination.

The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See Complaints and Grievances, page 30)

### **Discharge of Convicted Employees Policy DF**

The District shall discharge any employee who has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for an offense requiring the registration as a sex offender or convicted of a felony under Title 5 Penal Code if the victim was a minor.

If the offense is more than 30 years before the person's employment began or the

person satisfied all terms of the court order entered on conviction the requirement to discharge does not apply.

### **Job Abandonment/Involuntary Resignation**

An employee with excessive consecutive absences not covered under Board policy may be considered to have abandoned their job. This applies to an employee during normal course of employment as well as the scheduled return from vacation or leaves of absences. The District may terminate a contract or at will employee if an employee is considered to have abandoned his/her job.

### **Reemployment of Personnel**

Former STISD employees shall be ineligible for rehire if the separation was due to any of the following:

1. Termination for just cause;
2. Resignation or retirement in lieu of termination for just cause, including resignation or retirement during development or pendency of administrative proceeding seeking termination of employment, based on substantiated misconduct.
3. Resignation or retirement during the course of an internal investigation for alleged misconduct, which, if substantiated would constitute just cause for termination;
4. Categorization of ineligibility for rehire pursuant to other STISD policy; and/or
5. Resignation without reasonable notice set out in policy.

### **Exit Interviews and Procedures Policies DC and CY**

Exit interviews will be scheduled for all employees leaving the district. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the district with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the district with feedback on his or her employment experience. All district keys, books, property including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment.

### **Reports to Texas Education Agency Policy DF**

The resignation or termination of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA if there is evidence that the employee was involved in any of the following:

- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other unlawful conduct with a student or a minor
- Soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of district property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate



- or permit for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation
- Committing a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on district property or at a school- sponsored event

The reporting requirements above are in addition to the superintendent's ongoing duty to notify TEA when a certified employee or an applicant for certification has a reported criminal history or engaged in conduct violating the assessment security procedures established under TEC §39.0301. "Reported criminal history" means any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions including arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal information, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction that is obtained by a means other than the Fingerprint-based Applicant Clearinghouse of Texas (FACT).

**Noncertified Employees.** The voluntary or involuntary separation of a noncertified employee from the district must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA by the superintendent if there is evidence the employee abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor, was involved in a romantic relationship with a student or minor or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor.

### **Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding**

The district is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance. Notice of the following must be sent to the support recipient and the court or, in the case of child support, the Texas Attorney General Child Support Division:

- Termination of employment not later than the seventh day after the date of termination
- Employee's last known address
- Name and address of the employee's new employer, if known

## **Student Issues**

### **Equal Educational Opportunities Policies FB, FFH**

In an effort to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, South Texas ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) 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.

Questions or concerns about discrimination against students based on sex, including sexual harassment should be directed to Lissa Frausto, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, 100 Med High Drive, Mercedes, TX 78570, lissa.frausto@stisd.net, 956-514-4225 or 956-246-2522, the district Title IX coordinator for students. Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to Lissa Frausto, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, 100 Med High Drive, Mercedes, TX 78570, lissa.frausto@stisd.net, 956-514-4225 or 956-246-2522, the district ADA/Section 504 coordinator for students. All other questions or concerns relating to discrimination based on any other reasons should be directed to the Superintendent.

## **Student Records Policy FL**

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records. The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records:

- Parents: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights
- The student: The rights of parents transfer to a student who turns 18 or is enrolled in an institution of post- secondary education. A district is not prohibited from granting the student access to the student's records before this time.
- School officials with legitimate educational interests

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

## **Parent and Student Complaints Policy FNG**

In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted orderly processes for handling complaints on different issues. Any campus office or the superintendent's office can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint.

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teacher or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved to their satisfaction should be directed to the campus principal. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with a principal's response.

## **Administering Medication to Students Policy FFAC**

Only designated employees may administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. Exceptions apply to the self-administration of asthma medication, medication for anaphylaxis (e.g., EpiPen), and medication for diabetes management, if the medication is self-administered in accordance with district policy and procedures. A student who must take any other medication during the school day must bring a written request from his or her parent and the medicine in its original, properly labeled container.

Contact the principal or school nurse for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

## **Dietary Supplements**

### **Policies DH, FFAC**

District employees are prohibited by state law from knowingly selling, marketing, or distributing a dietary supplement that contains performance-enhancing compounds to a student with whom the employee has contact as part of his or her school district duties. In addition, employees may not knowingly endorse or suggest the ingestion, intranasal application, or inhalation of a performance-enhancing dietary supplement to any student.

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

### **Policy FFAC**

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

District employees are prohibited by state law from doing the following:

- Recommending that a student use a psychotropic drug
- Suggesting a particular diagnosis
- Excluding from class or school-related activity a student whose parent refuses to consent to a psychiatric evaluation or to authorize the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student

## **Student Conduct and Discipline**

### **Policies in the FN series and FO series**

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management strategies that have been adopted by the district. Other employees that have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus principal.

## **Student Attendance**

### **Policy FEB**

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the district's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require minor students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the student handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

## **Bullying**

### **Policy FFI**

All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying to the campus principal. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and is reprinted below:

**FFI (LOCAL)**

The District prohibits bullying as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the District and that:

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

**Hazing  
Policy FNCC**

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of "initiation rites" of a school club or organization. While most initiation rites are permissible, engaging in or permitting "hazing" is a criminal offense.

Any teacher, administrator, or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus.

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