

ECTOR COUNTY ISD
2024-2025

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



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INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT BECAUSE OF A
DISABILITY, PLEASE EMAIL
BETHANY.IBARRA@ECTORCOUNTYISD.ORG.

ECTOR COUNTY ISD DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE
BASIS OF GENDER, AGE, RACE, NATIONALITY,
RELIGION, DISABILITY, SOCIOECONOMIC STANDING,
OR NON-PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS
IN PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR
STUDENTS' BENEFIT.

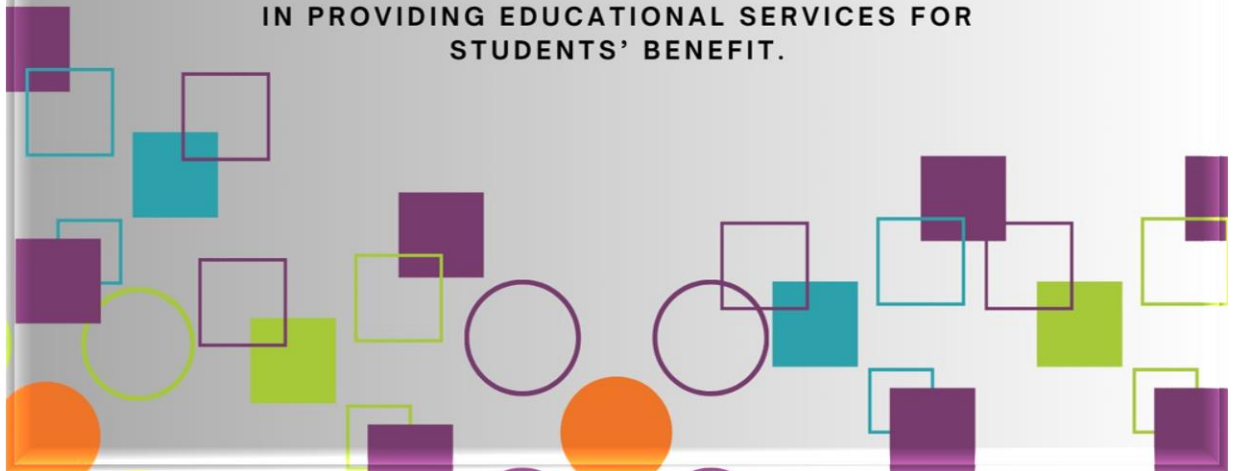


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Welcome from our Superintendent

Scott R. Muri, Ed. D
Superintendent | Ector County Independent School District
P.O. Box 3912
Odessa, Texas 79760
(432) 456-9879



Dear Ector County ISD Team:

On behalf of the ECISD Board of Trustees and Administration, I would like to personally welcome each of you to the 2024-2025 school year. Working together, we can make this the very best year in the history of ECISD!

The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance and information that will help you understand our District's expectations. We want to make certain all employees are well informed and knowledgeable of the opportunities for outstanding performance and conduct. Together, we will demonstrate professional behavior, a cooperative spirit, and help develop a positive working environment for all.

Please review this document carefully. It is every employee's responsibility to be knowledgeable of and abide by Board policies. This handbook provides the professional conditions that need to be present for us to accomplish our very critical work together- the teaching, learning, and safety of our students.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott R. Muri', is placed above the printed name of the superintendent.

Scott R. Muri, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Believing OUR Students are THE Future, the mission of Ector County ISD is to inspire and challenge every student to be prepared for success to be adaptable in an ever-changing society.

Employee Handbook Receipt

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

Note: Signature Acknowledgement will be completed via the Employee Self-Service (ESS) system. Employees will receive an email notification to complete.

Employees have the option of receiving the handbook in electronic format or hard copy.

[Employee Handbook - Ector County Independent School District \(ectorcountysd.org\)](https://www.ectorcountysd.org)

Please indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box 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 and understand I am required to contact campus administrator to obtain a hard copy.

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 document. 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 or the department head if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

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. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to Dr. Matthew Spivy, Executive Director of Human Resources.

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 Online at: [Administrative Regulations - Ector County Independent School District \(ectorcountysd.org\)](https://www.ectorcountysd.org/Administrative-Regulations)

District Regulations can be accessed Online at: [Ector County ISD Board Policy Manual - Policy Online \(tasb.org\)](https://www.tasb.org/Ector-County-Independent-School-District-Board-Policy-Manual)

District Information

Description of the District

Ector County Independent School District operates with one central goal – equity and excellence for every child. Believing OUR students are THE Future, the mission of Ector County ISD is to inspire and challenge every student to be prepared for success and to be adaptable in an ever-changing society.

To that end, ECISD places a tremendous emphasis on the district Strategic Plan:

1. Foundations of Excellence
2. Invest in Talent
3. The Learning Journey

The district offers very competitive pay; for a complete list of salaries visit 2024-2025 Compensation Plan at: [Compensation - Ector County Independent School District \(ectorcountysd.org\)](https://www.ectorcountysd.org/Compensation)

Founded in 1921, the District is in the top 50 largest school districts in the State of Texas. It covers 906 square miles, utilizes 45 campuses to educate more than 32,000 students, and employs more than 4,000 people.

The student population breaks down as follows: Hispanic/Latino 80.32%, White 13.34%, Black or African American 3.49%, Asian 0.91%, American Indian or Alaska Native 0.17%, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 0.32%, and Two or more 1.45%.

District Map

[Ector County ISD \(schoolsitelocator.com\)](http://schoolsitelocator.com)

Vision: OUR students...The future

Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

Policy AE

Believing OUR Students are THE Future, the mission of Ector County ISD is to inspire and challenge every student to be prepared for success and to be adaptable in an ever-changing society.

Board Goals, and Objectives (Policy AE)

1. Through foundational excellence, talent development, and the learning journey, the percentage of students achieving or exceeding the Meets Standard on state assessments will increase from 32% to 60% by May 2024 across all tested content areas.
2. Through foundational excellence, talent development, and the learning journey, the percentage of 3rd-grade students reading at or above grade level will increase from 35% to 45% by May 2024.
3. Through foundational excellence, talent development, and the learning journey, the percentage of high school graduates considered College, Career, or Military Ready will increase from 56% to 65% by May 2024.

Foundational Excellence

We will create an agile, forward-thinking organization that operates with excellence today, while continuously researching and innovating tomorrow's practices.

Investing in Talent

Recruit, develop, and retain highly effective individuals who are invested in looking at tomorrow to inform their practices today.

Learning Journey

Establish rigorous standards while balancing pressure and support for individuals to work hard and achieve goals they have yet to dream. Equip students to be adaptable in an ever-changing society.

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.

The board of trustees is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the district's children. Board members are elected single-member district and serve four-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

- Christopher Stanley – Board President – Single Member District #4 – Term 2021-2025
- Delma Abalos – Board Vice President – Single Member District #2 – Term 2021-2025
- Tammy Hawkins – Board Secretary – Single Member District # 6 - Term: 2023-2027
- Dawn Miller – Board Member – Single Member District # 1 – Term: 2023-2027
- Wayne Woodall – Board Member – Single Member District # 3 – Term: 2023-2027
- Dr. Steve Brown – Board Member – Single Member District # 5 – Term: 2021-2025
- Robert Thayer – Board Member – Single Member District # 7 – Term: 2021-2025

The board usually meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Work Study meetings of the Board are held on the second Tuesday preceding the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and posted at the administration building 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 one-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

July 16, 2024

August 20, 2024

September 17, 2024

October 15, 2024

November 19, 2024

December 17, 2024

January 21, 2025

February 18, 2025

March 25, 2025

April 15, 2025

May 20, 2025

June 17, 2025

Administration

[Quick Facts / Organization Charts \(ectorcountyisd.org\)](https://www.ectorcountyisd.org/QuickFacts/OrganizationCharts)

Superintendent's Cabinet:

Dr. Scott Muri, Superintendent

Dr. Anthony Sorola, Associate Superintendent of Athletics, Human Capital & Operations

Dr. Kellie Wilks, Chief Technology Officer

Dr. Kelley Boyer, Chief of Schools

Dr. Lilia Nanez, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Deborah Ottmers, Chief Financial Officer

Alicia Syverson, Associate Superintendent for Student & School Support

Mike Adkins, Chief Communications Officer

School Calendar

The Board of Trustees approved the District's official calendar in February for the 2024-2025 school year. The calendar is available on the District's website: [Calendar - Ector County Independent School District \(ectorcountysd.org\)](https://www.ectorcountysd.org/Calendar)

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.

<u>Department</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Accounting	802 N. Sam Houston	456-9691	Supervisor - Dusty Baumann
Accountability	802 N. Sam Houston	456-5811	Exec. Director – Roberto Trejo
Athletics	802 N. Sam Houston	456-9059	Exec. Director - Tracey Borchardt
AVID	302 E. 29th St.	456-8549	District Director - Amy Anderson
Benefits & Risk Management	802 N. Sam Houston	456-9784	Director - Yolanda Gordon
Bilingual Education/ESL	802 N. Sam Houston	456-8751	Exec. Director - Betsabe Salcido

Career and Technical Education	802 N. Sam Houston	456-8911	Exec. Director – Ryan Merritt
Communications	802 N. Sam Houston	456-9019	Chief Communication Officer- Mike Adkins
Curriculum and Instruction	802 N. Sam Houston	456-8491 456-8492	Exec. Director – Lisa Wills Exec. Director – Dr. Andrea Moreno-Hewitt
Custodial	2225 W. 8th	456-9609	Director – Robert Peugh
Development Office	619 W. 10 th	456-7059	Director – Celeste Potter
ECISD Police	1312 N. Lee	456-9999	Chief of Police – Jeff Daniels
Executive Directors of Leadership	802 N. Sam Houston	456-8899	Anthony Garcia Mauricio Marquez Dr. Maggie Aguilar
Director of Admin. Services	802 N. Sam Houston	456-8899	Maribel Aranda
Federal and State Programs	802 N. Sam Houston	456-0063	Director – Manuela Escajeda
Finance	802 N. Sam Houston	456-9709	Director - Albessa Chavez
Fine Arts	300 E. 29th	456-8611	Exec. Director – Dr. Aaron Hawley

Guidance and Counseling	802 N. Sam Houston	456-8553	Exec. Director – Taylor Roy
Health Services	4303 Plaza Blvd.	456-8869	Director – Ali Hernandez
Human Resources	802 N. Sam Houston	456-1009	Exec. Director – Dr. Matthew Spivy
Information Systems	802 N. Sam Houston	456-9729	Director – Heather Potts
Instructional Materials	119 E. 52nd	456-8979	Coordinator – Amy Miller
Maintenance	2225 W. 8th	456-9559	Director - Gary Weatherford
Payroll	802 N. Sam Houston	456-9769	Director - Armando Nunez
Print Shop/Mail Room	1621 E. 5th	456-9759	Supervisor – Everette Elmore
Purchasing	802 N. Sam Houston	456-9719	Director – Jerry Mahana
School Nutrition	1120 W. 10th	456-9749	Director – Dr. Jieun Pando
Special Services	804 N. Sam Houston	456-8719	Exec. Director – Mark Gabrylczyk
Student Assistance	301 E. Clements	456-8561	Director – Leticia Bernal
Student Admissions and Transfers	910 N. Lee	456-8892	Specialist – Edith Sanchez

Student and School Support	802 N. Sam Houston	456-8849	Director of Choice Programs Access and Support –
Talent Development	802 N. Sam Houston	456-8481	Exec. Director –
Technology Help Desk	806 N. Lee	456-8649	Supervisor – Alma Munoz
Technology Specialist	802 N. Sam Houston	456-8481 456-8643	Director of Digital Learning-Lauren Tavarez Information Technology Director-Toby Lefevers
Testing	119 E. 52nd	456-8529	VACANT
Transportation	2211 W. 10th	456-9869	Director – Hilberto Ochoa

School Directory

[School Directory \(schoolwires.net\)](http://schoolwires.net)

Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity

Policies DAA, DIA

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Ector County 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 prohibited from discriminating on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The prohibition against discrimination 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: *Dr. Jessica Southern, Director of Human Resources, 802 N. Sam Houston, Odessa, Texas 79761, jessica.southern@ectorcountyisd.org, and (432)456-9351.* 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 with concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: *Dr. Jessica Southern, Director of Human Resources, 802 N. Sam Houston, Odessa, Texas 79761, jessica.southern@ectorcountyisd.org, and (432)456-9351.*

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 on the district's website. [Current Job Openings - Ector County Independent School District \(ectorcountyisd.org\)](http://www.ectorcountyisd.org)

Employment after Retirement

Policy DC

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed under certain 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 Website (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 teachers new to the district and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive a probationary contract during their first three years of employment. Probationary contracts are one-year contracts.

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. Employment policies can be accessed Online or copies will be provided upon request.

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 a 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 the appropriate HR Director in a timely manner. Employees licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR) must notify the appropriate HR Director when there is action against, or revocation of, their license.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without Chapter 21 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 the appropriate HR Director 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 the appropriate HR Director if you have any questions regarding reverification of employment authorization. Failure to verify employment authorization may result in termination.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

Policy CQ, DHE

Noninvestigatory 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. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may result if an employee refuses to submit to testing or is found to violate district policy.

Employees Required to Have a Commercial Driver's License. Any employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to alcohol and drug 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 testing policies and related educational material should contact the Risk Benefits & Risk Management Manager.

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, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to their department director, campus principal, or their designee by the beginning of the school year.

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. Reassignments as determined by HR are due to enrollment shifts, program changes, or other extenuating circumstances. 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).

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. A teacher requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit his or her request during the voluntary teacher transfer window. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and or the campus. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Human Resource Department and must be approved by the current and potential supervisor and the appropriate Executive Director of Leadership.

Workload and Work Schedules

Policies DEAB, DK, DL

Professional Employees. Professional employees and academic administrators are exempt from overtime pay and are employed 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. The Duty Calendars can be found at: [Ector County Intranet - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

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 media specialists (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 must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. See Overtime Compensation on page 26 for additional information.

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 from other employees and the public 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.

The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections of Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP Act) requires an employee to notify the district if they believe the district is out of compliance in providing breaks for a nursing mother. The employee must give the district 10 days to come into compliance before making any claim of liability against the district. An employee with concerns should contact the Title IX ADAA Coordinator.

Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) provides consideration of accommodations to employees who have known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. An employee seeking a PWFA accommodation should contact the Title IX ADAA coordinator to begin the interactive process.

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 notice 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 contact the appropriate HR Director.

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. An employee shall disclose in writing to his/her immediate supervisor private tutoring of District students for pay. 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.

Teachers may request a second T-TESS. The evaluation will be completed by another administrator at the teacher's assigned campus or another campus administrator at the EDL's discretion.

A teacher may request a second appraisal by another certified appraiser at the following times: (1) for Domains I, II, and III, after receiving a written observation summary with which the teacher disagrees; or (2) for Domain IV, as identified in §150.1002(a) of this title, and for the performance of teachers' students, after receiving a written summative annual appraisal report with which the teacher disagrees.

The second appraisal must be requested within 10 working days of receiving a written observation summary or a written summative annual appraisal report.

A teacher may not request a second appraisal by another certified appraiser in response to a written summative annual appraisal report for the ratings of dimensions in Domains I, II, and III, if those ratings are based entirely on observation summaries or written documentation already received by the teacher earlier in the appraisal year for which the teacher already had the opportunity to request a second appraisal.

The second appraiser shall make observations and walk-throughs as necessary to evaluate the dimensions in Domains I-III or shall review the Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan for evidence of goal attainment and professional development activities, when applicable. Cumulative data may also be used by the second appraiser to evaluate other dimensions.

The second appraisal will be conducted either by another administrator at the teacher's assigned campus or by another campus administrator at the EDL's discretion. Upon receiving the second appraisal, the initial appraiser, the second appraiser, and the EDL will review and calibrate the ratings for each Dimension. If the ratings for a dimension differ by one rating or less, the initial appraisal rating will remain. If the ratings differ by more than one rating, documentation from coaching sessions, walkthroughs, or other classroom observations will be used to determine the appropriate rating, agreed upon by the two appraisers and the EDL. A

new appraisal will be entered into Eduphoria to reflect the calibrated ratings and determinations.

Employee Involvement

Policies BQA, BQB

At both the campus and district levels, Ector County 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 or from the appropriate Executive Director.

Staff Development

Policy DMA

Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the district. Staff development for instructional personnel is district and campus-based, related to achieving district and campus performance objectives, addressed in the district and campus improvement plan. ECISD publishes a board approved professional learning plan each year describing the different types of professional learning and learning goals for the district. 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 Compensation Plan is reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Each position is classified according to job title within the district's Compensation Plan based on the qualifications, duties, and market value of the position. 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 nonexempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. A non-

exempt employee must have the approval of his or her supervisor before working overtime. (See *Overtime Compensation*, page 26.)

All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules each school year. Classroom teachers, full-time media specialists (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 and/or supplemental pay.

Employees should contact the payroll department for more information about the district’s pay schedules or their own pay.

Paychecks

All professional and salaried employees are paid monthly. Hourly employees are paid semi-monthly. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee’s written authorization. Employees are responsible for regularly reviewing the accuracy of their pay statements.

The schedule of pay dates for the 2024–2025 school year follows:

2024-2025 PAY DATES		
SUBSTITUTE/PAYROLL 7	SEMIMONTHLY/PAYROLL 5	MONTHLY/PAYROLL 6
July 15, 2024	July 16, 2024 July 31, 2024	July 31, 2024
August 15, 2024	August 16, 2024 August 30, 2024	August 30, 2024
September 13, 2024	September 16, 2024 September 30, 2024	September 30, 2024
October 15, 2024	October 16, 2024 October 31, 2024	October 31, 2024
November 15, 2024	November 15, 2024 November 26, 2024	November 26, 2024
December 13, 2024	December 16, 2024	December 18, 2024
January 15, 2025	January 16, 2025 January 31, 2025	January 31, 2025

February 14, 2025	February 14, 2025 February 28, 2025	February 28, 2025
March 17, 2025	March 17, 2025 March 31, 2025	March 31, 2025
April 15, 2025	April 16, 2025 April 30, 2025	April 30, 2025
May 15, 2025	May 16, 2025 May 30, 2025	May 30, 2025
June 16, 2025	June 16, 2025 June 26, 2025	June 26, 2025

Automatic Payroll Deposit

Employees will have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of 3 weeks is necessary to activate this service. Contact the Payroll Department 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 or prepaid tuition programs. Employees also may request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations, alternative certification programs, housing, and certain charitable contributions approved by the Board of Trustees. Salary re-deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Overpayments. Employees are not entitled to any funds the district overpays. An overpayment occurs if an employee is paid more than the amount the employee should have been paid under the assigned pay grade and applicable supplemental pay.

If an overpayment is reported in the current fiscal year, a payment plan will be developed to recoup the payment. Generally, an overpayment will be paid in one pay cycle. However, if this creates an undue hardship for the employee, the district has the discretion to develop a plan for regular payroll deductions in the same fiscal year.

Overtime Compensation

Policies DEAB, DEC

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. A nonexempt employee who works overtime without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

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. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:00 a.m. Monday and ends at 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for up to and including a 40-hour workweek. At the District's option, non-exempt employees may receive compensatory time off rather than overtime pay for overtime work.

Employees may be compensated for overtime (i.e., hours beyond 40 in a workweek) 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 40 hours of comp time.
- 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 is 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 and program director, if applicable, 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 allowable expenses other than mileage.

Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

Policy CRD

Group health insurance coverage is available to full-time and part-time employees who qualify for coverage. The district's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the Medical Plan Committee. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, prices, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees on the ECISD Benefits homepage at: [HOME - Ector County Independent School District \(ectorcountysd.org\)](https://www.ectorcountyschools.org/benefits)

The health insurance plan year is from January through December. New employees must complete enrollment forms within the first 31 days of employment. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment. Employees may make mid-year changes if they experience a qualifying event (family status change). These events include birth, death, marriage, divorce, employment changes and gain or loss of coverage. Employees should contact the Benefits Department for more information.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for dental, vision, additional life, disability, cancer, accident, legal shield, and identity theft. They may also enroll in optional retirement benefits through 403b and 457 plans. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Benefits Department 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 of open enrollment.

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 through a partially self-funded worker compensation plan effective September 1, 1988.

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 the employee's immediate supervisor. 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 39 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 ECISD Benefits Department or Texas Workforce Solution at 1-800-939-6631.

Teacher Retirement

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). Substitutes not receiving TRS service retirement benefits who work at least 90 days a year are eligible to purchase a year of creditable service in TRS. 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 ECISD Human Resource Department 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.texas.gov). See page 16 for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

Other Benefit Programs

[Benefits & Risk Management / OPTIONAL BENEFITS \(\[ectorcountysd.org\]\(http://ectorcountysd.org\)\)](#)

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 five days or for an extended period should call their supervisor. In addition, the employee should contact the Benefits Department for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums, and requirements for communicating with the district.

Paid leave must be used in whole or half day increments. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state and local leave. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order:

- Local Leave
- State sick leave accumulated before the 1995-96 school year
- State personal leave

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.

If an hourly employee does not report or request leave of absence(s) according to district procedures, the incident is considered a "no call/no show". An employee who is absent for 3 consecutive days without notice is considered to have abandoned their job and may face disciplinary consequences up to and including termination.

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 5 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 leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) 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 FMLA 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.

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 personal leave is equivalent to the number of hours per day in an employee's usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts, and generally transfers to education service centers. Leave accepted by an employee who was formerly employed by a regional education service center (ESC), is not to exceed five days per year for each year of employment. 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 accumulated before May 30, 1995.

Nondiscretionary use includes leave related to the birth or placement of a child and taken within the first year after the child's birth, adoption, or foster placement. Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary 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 request to his or her principal or supervisor 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.

Individual campus supervisors have the authority to place limitations on the number of instructional staff who request discretionary leave on the same workday. Employees may not use discretionary leave on state-mandated test days, on District-approved staff development days, during the first or last five days of the semester, or on the school day preceding or following a District, state, or national holiday.

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.

Excessive Absences. If an exempt employee misses more than their annual allotment of 10 Local and State Days, the absences may be considered excessive. The immediate supervisor shall conduct a conference with the employee to discuss potential adverse action up to and including termination or non-renewal.

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 whole or half-day increments. 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

Each full-time employee shall earn paid local leave days per school year in accordance with the following:

Duty Schedule	Local Leave days earned
Up to 187 days (10.0 months)	5.0
197 days (10.5 months)	5.5
207 days (11.0 months)	6.0
217 days (11.5 months)	6.5
227 days or more (12.0 months)	7.0

Accumulation of local leave shall be based on the number of days in the employee's annual duty schedule. When unused local leave is combined with the accumulated state leave, the total shall not exceed one-half of the total number of days in the employee's annual duty schedule.

Local leave shall be used according to the terms and conditions of state sick leave accumulated before the 1995-96 school year, except that an employee may donate local leave to a sick leave pool. See DEC (LOCAL)

Special Leave of Absence

A district employee with at least five years of service with the District may be granted a one-year special leave of absence. Each request shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

An employee shall submit an application (DEC Regulation, Exhibit D) stating the nature of leave and the purposes for which leave is requested. Attach doctor's order, if applicable. The application shall be submitted to the Executive Director of HR. If the request for leave is granted, it shall be subject to the following conditions.

1. The special leave of absence shall be granted for no more than one year.
2. Upon return, any accumulated leave that was available at the beginning of the employee's special leave of absence shall be reinstated.
3. Reassignment, if available, shall be made to the same position held at the time the special leave of absence was granted.

By March 1st of the year of the special leave of absence, the employee on leave must state in written form his or her intention to return to the District. Such statements must be sent by certified mail with a return receipt requested to the Executive Director of HR. The employee shall return to the position to which he or she was assigned at the time of the special leave of absence if a position is available. Otherwise, the employee shall be considered an excess employee with placement at another District location. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment. See DF (LOCAL)

Vacation

Policy DED

Only permanent, full-time, 12-month positions will be eligible for vacation leave. The use of any employee leave requires the advance approval of the immediate supervisor and administrator and is dependent upon the ability of each department to maintain delivery of services.

Eligible employees will annually earn a maximum of ten vacation days at one day per month from September 1st through June 30th. Employees who earned more than ten days per year before May 16, 1995, will earn on tenth of their vacation rate per month up to their maximum per year. Employees promoted or assigned to a 12-month position will be eligible for proration of the maximum ten-day vacation leave. If an employee is promoted/assigned in the first half of a calendar month (by the 15th of each month), he or she shall be eligible for a day for that month. A terminating employee who works through the 15th of the month shall also be eligible for a vacation day for that month.

Unused vacation leave shall be paid after the end of employment with the District. Effective with the 1999-2000 school year, 15 days shall be the maximum amount eligible for remuneration.

Employees who accrued more than ten days of vacation before May 16, 1995, shall retain and maintain the number of days they earned before that date. Effective for the 1999-2000 school year, 20 days shall be the maximum amount eligible for remuneration.

Employees may carry unused earned vacation leave from one year to the next with a maximum of 15 days. The end of the year for this purpose is August. Unused vacation leave will be paid after the end of employment with the District.

Sick Leave Bank (or Pool)

DEC (Regulation)

A Sick Leave Fund program is available to eligible employees with personal or family catastrophic illnesses or injuries. Employees must request approval for donations according to DEC (LOCAL). Contact the Benefits Department for more information.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—General Provisions

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

What is FMLA leave?

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides eligible employees with **job-protected leave** for qualifying family and medical reasons.

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division (WHD) enforces the FMLA for most employees. Eligible employees can take **up to 12 workweeks** of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child with you,
- Your serious mental or physical health condition that makes you unable to work,
- To care for your spouse, child, or parent with a serious mental or physical health condition, and
- Certain qualifying reasons related to the foreign deployment of your spouse, child, or parent who is a military servicemember.

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

You have the right to use FMLA leave in **one block of time**. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, you may take FMLA leave **intermittently in separate blocks of time, or on a reduced schedule** by working less hours each day or week. Read Fact Sheet

#28M(c) for more information or visit the ECISD's Benefits Department at: [LEAVE BENEFITS - Ector County Independent School District \(ectorcountysd.org\)](https://www.ectorcountyschools.org/leave-benefits)

FMLA leave is **not paid leave**, but you may choose, or be required by your employer, to use any employer-provided paid leave if your employer's paid leave policy covers the reason for which you need FMLA leave.

Am I eligible to take FMLA leave?

You are an **eligible employee** if *all* of the following apply:

- You work for a covered employer,
- You have worked for your employer at least 12 months,
- You have at least 1,250 hours of service for your employer during the 12 months before your leave, and
- Your employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of your work location

Airline flight crew employees have different "hours of service" requirements.

You work for a **covered employer** if **one** of the following applies:

- You work for a private employer that had at least 50 employees during at least 20 workweeks in the current or previous calendar year,
- You work for an elementary or public or private secondary school, or
- You work for a public agency, such as a local, state or federal government agency. Most federal employees are covered by Title II of the FMLA, administered by the Office of Personnel Management

How do I request FMLA leave?

Generally, **to request FMLA leave you *must***:

- Follow your employer's normal policies for requesting leave,
- Give notice at least 30 days before your need for FMLA leave, or
- If advance notice is not possible, give notice as soon as possible.

You **do not have to share a medical diagnosis** but must provide enough information to your employer so they can determine whether the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. You ***must* also inform your employer if FMLA leave was previously taken** or approved for the same reason when requesting additional leave.

Your **employer *may* request certification** from a health care provider to verify medical leave and may request certification of a qualifying exigency.

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

State employees may be subject to certain limitations in pursuit of direct lawsuits regarding leave for their own serious health conditions. Most federal and certain congressional employees are also covered by the law but are subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or Congress

What does my employer need to do?

If you are eligible for FMLA leave, your employer ***must***:

- Allow you to take job-protected time off work for a qualifying reason,
- Continue your group health plan coverage while you are on leave on the same basis as if you had not taken leave, and
- Allow you to return to the same job, or a virtually identical job with the same pay, benefits and other working conditions, including shift and location, at the end of your leave.

Your **employer *cannot* interfere with your FMLA rights** or threaten or punish you for exercising your rights under the law. For example, your employer cannot retaliate against you for requesting FMLA leave or cooperating with a WHD investigation.

After becoming aware that your need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, your **employer *must* confirm whether you are eligible** or not eligible for FMLA leave. If your employer determines that you are eligible, **your employer *must* notify you in writing:**

- About your FMLA rights and responsibilities, and
- How much of your requested leave, if any, will be FMLA-protected leave.

Where can I find more information?

Call **1-866-487-9243** or visit **dol.gov/fmla** to learn more.

If you believe your rights under the FMLA have been violated, you may file a complaint with WHD or file a private lawsuit against your employer in court. **Scan the QR code to learn about our WHD complaint process.**



Local Procedures for Implementing Family and Medical Leave Provisions

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period.

- measured backward from the date an employee uses FML

When an employee requests leave, the employee shall provide, certification, in accordance with FML regulations, of the need for leave.

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. Spouses who are 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 to 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 the ECISD Benefits Department 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 from the Benefits & Risk Management Department. 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 requests temporary disability leave in writing and is denied, he or she has the right to request a hearing before the Executive Director of HR.

When an employee is ready to return to work, the Human Resources and Benefits Department 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 Executive Director of HR. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, the employee will be reinstated to an appropriate position 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 incident involving an assault is a work-related injury and should be immediately reported to the ECISD Police Department.

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 nonresponsible 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 written 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.

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.

Compliance with a Subpoena

Employees will be paid while on leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding and will not be required to use personal leave. Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

Truancy Court Appearances

An employee who is a parent, guardian of a child, or a court-appointed guardian ad litem of a child who is required to miss work to attend a truancy court hearing may use personal leave or compensatory time for the absence. Employees who do not have paid leave available will be docked for any absence required because of the court appearance.

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 15 days of paid leave per fiscal year when engaged in authorized training or duty orders by proper authority. An additional seven days of leave per fiscal year are available if called to state active duty in response to a disaster. In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service.

Effective September 1, 2021, an employee as described above, who is called to state active duty by the governor or another appropriate authority in response to a disaster is entitled to a paid leave of absence from the person's duties for each day the person is called to active duty during the disaster, not to exceed seven workdays in a fiscal year. During this leave of absence, the person may not be subjected to loss of time, efficiency rating, personal time, sick leave, or vacation time.

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. Employees returning to work following military leave should contact the Human Resources Department. 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 Benefits Department for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Mental Health Leave for Peace Officers and Licensed Telecommunicators

Effective September 1, 2021, any school district peace officer who experiences a traumatic event in the scope of employment may be granted up to three days of paid mental health leave. Leave will be made available without a deduction in compensation. Guidelines for granting and use of mental health leave may be obtained from the District Benefits Department.

Quarantine Leave for Peace Officers

Effective June 15, 2021, a peace officer may be ordered to isolate or quarantine because of possible exposure to a communicable disease while performing district-assigned duties. This applies only when the peace officer is required to isolate by his/her supervisor or the District's health authority. The peace officer (while isolated) shall receive all employment benefits and compensation for the duration of the leave and reimbursement for reasonable costs of the isolation or quarantine. It is important to note, that the peace officer is covered only when the exposure occurs while performing a district-assigned duty and has been ordered by the supervisor or the district's health authority. Refer all questions regarding this section, to the Benefits Department.

Leave for Police Officers for Illness or Injury

A full-time district-employed licensed police officer who regularly serves in a law enforcement capacity in a district police department is entitled to a paid leave of absence (LOA) for an illness or injury related to the person's line of duty. If necessary, the leave shall continue for at least one year.

Payment for Accumulated Leave Upon Separation

DEC(LOCAL)

[DEC\(LOCAL\) - Compensation and Benefits: Leaves and Absences](#)

Payment for Accumulated Leave Upon Separation

The following leave provisions shall apply to state and local leave accumulated beginning on September 28, 1992, the original effective date of this program and applicable provisions, below.

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

1. The employee's separation from employment is voluntary, i.e., the employee is retiring or resigning and is not being discharged, terminated, or nonrenewed.
2. The employee provides advance written notice of intent to separate from employment. Contract employees must provide written notice at least 45 calendar days before the last day of instruction. Noncontract employees must provide written notice at least two weeks before the last day of employment.
3. If retiring, the employee has at least five consecutive years of employment with the District.

4. If resigning, the employee has at least 20 consecutive years of employment with the District.

Payment for accumulated leave shall be computed at one-half the daily rate at the time of retirement or resignation times the number of accumulated leave days, which shall not exceed one-half the number of working days in an annual contract.

The computation of accumulated leave benefit shall be based on the employee's current salary schedule. No benefits shall exceed a teacher salary schedule adopted by the Board for that year.

In order to receive payment for accumulated leave, retirement or resignation must occur at the end of the employee's contract or work year, or when retirement is necessitated by a medical disability as approved by the Teacher Retirement System (TRS). Exceptions must receive approval from the Superintendent.

Upon the death of an employee, these benefits shall be payable to his or her heirs.

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 on the campus, at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities.

Recognition and appreciation activities also include: Staff Recognition, Teacher Appreciation, and Employee Service Awards.

District Communications

Throughout the school year, the Communications Department publishes newsletters, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

They may include the following:

- Daily updates to Ector County ISD Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts.
- ECISD e-News (e-mails sent to all staff every Friday and after each school board meeting).

- Monthly recognition of students and/or staff achievements at Board of Trustees meetings.
- Calendar book for employees.
- Graphic designs, photography, and video production.
- Regular communication with and story ideas sent to local media outlets.
- Convocation
- School Board Recognition Month activities in January.
- United Way Campaign coordination in October.
- State of the District
- Awards for Excellence student recognition in May.
- Texas Public Information Act Requests.
- Teacher of the Year Awards.

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:

[Policy DBGA \(LOCAL\)](#)

[DGBA\(XHIBIT\) - Personnel Management Relations Employee Complaint Grievances.pdf - Google Drive](#)

DGBA(LOCAL) Personnel – Management Relations Employee Complaints/Grievances

Complaints: In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning.

Other Complaint Processes: Employee complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies listed below. Some of these policies require appeals to be submitted in accordance with DGBA after the relevant complaint process:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination, including violations of Title IX (gender), Title VII (sex, race, color, religion, national origin), ADEA (age), or Section 504 (disability), shall be submitted in accordance with DIA.
2. Complaints alleging certain forms of harassment, including harassment by a supervisor and violation of Title VII, shall be submitted in accordance with DIA.
3. Complaints concerning retaliation relating to discrimination and harassment shall be submitted in accordance with DIA.
4. Complaints concerning instructional resources shall be submitted in accordance with EF.
5. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District shall be submitted in accordance with CKE.
6. Complaints concerning the proposed nonrenewal of a term contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Education Code shall be submitted in accordance with DFBB.
7. Complaints concerning the proposed termination or suspension without pay of an employee on a probationary, term, or continuing contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Education Code during the contract term shall be submitted in accordance with DFAA, DFBA, or DFCA.

Notice to Employees – The District shall inform employees of this policy through appropriate District publications.

Guiding Principles:

Informal Process - The Board encourages employees to discuss their concerns with their supervisor, principal, or other appropriate administrator who has the authority to address the concerns. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal resolution shall be encouraged but shall not extend any deadlines in this policy, except by mutual written consent.

Direct Communication with Board Trustees - Employees shall not be prohibited from communicating with a member of the Board regarding District operations except when communication between an employee and a Board member would be inappropriate because of a pending hearing or appeal related to the employee.

Formal Process - An employee 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.

Freedom from Retaliation - Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against an employee for bringing a concern or complaint.

Whistleblower Complaints - Whistleblower complaints shall be filed within the time specified by law and may be made to the Superintendent or designee beginning at Level Two. Time lines for the employee and the District set out in this policy may be shortened to allow the Board to make a final decision within 60 calendar days of the initiation of the complaint. [See DG]

Complaints Against Supervisors - Complaints alleging a violation of law by a supervisor may be made to the Superintendent or designee. Complaint forms alleging a violation of law by the Superintendent may be submitted directly to the Board or designee.

General Provisions

Filing - Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, electronic communication, including e-mail and fax, or U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

Scheduling Conferences - The District shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If the employee fails to appear at a scheduled conference, the District may hold the conference and issue a decision in the employee’s absence.

Response - At Levels One and Two, “response” shall mean a written communication to the employee from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered, sent by electronic communication to the employee’s e-mail address of record, or sent by U.S. Mail to the employee’s mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

Days - “Days” shall mean District business days, unless otherwise noted. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day a document is filed is “day zero.” The following business day is “day one.”

Representative - “Representative” shall mean any person who or an organization that does not claim the right to strike and is designated by the employee to represent him or her in the complaint process.

The employee may designate a representative through written notice to the District at any level of this process. The representative may participate in person or by telephone conference call. If the employee designates a representative with fewer than three days’ notice to the District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the District’s counsel. The District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

Consolidating Complaints - Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. Employees shall not file separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

When two or more complaints are sufficiently similar in nature and remedy sought to permit their resolution through one proceeding, the District may consolidate the complaints.

Untimely Filings - All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.

If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the employee, at any point during the complaint process. The employee may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within ten days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

Costs Incurred - Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

Complaint and Appeal Forms - Complaints and appeals under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the employee does not have copies of these documents, they may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the employee unless the employee did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint or appeal form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be refiled with all the required information if the refile is within the designated time for filing.

Audio Recording - As provided by law, an employee shall be permitted to make an audio recording of a conference or hearing under this policy at which the substance of the employee's complaint is discussed. The employee shall notify all attendees present that an audio recording is taking place.

Level One

Complaint forms must be filed:

1. Within 15 days of the date the employee first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem.

In most circumstances, employees on a school campus shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal; other District employees shall file Level One complaints with their immediate supervisor or the District administrator with authority to remedy the alleged problem.

If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and schedule a conference with the employee within ten days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the administrator shall provide the employee a written response within ten days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

Level Two

If the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level One response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Level Two administrator. The employee may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the employee at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Superintendent or designee shall schedule a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level One. At the conference, the employee may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The Superintendent or designee may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the employee a written response within ten days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the

decision. In reaching a decision, the Superintendent or designee may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Superintendent or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

Level Three

If the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may appeal the decision to the Board.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level Two response deadline.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform the employee of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the Board.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two appeal. The employee may request a copy of the Level Two record. The Level Two record shall include:

1. The Level One record.
2. The notice of appeal from Level One to Level Two.
3. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level Two, except that if at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the employee notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.

The District shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. [See BE]

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation, including an opportunity for the employee and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. The Board shall hear the

complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

In addition to any other record of the Board meeting required by law, the Board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three presentation. The Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the employee or the employee's representative, any presentation from the administration, and questions from the Board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio recording, or court reporter.

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board does not make a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

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 up to and including termination.
- 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, including intentionally making a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, up to and 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 knew of the incident. See *Reports to the Texas Education Agency*, page 107 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

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 up to and including termination.

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 reprinted below:

[**Policy DIA \(LOCAL\) Employee Welfare: Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.**](#)

DIA (REGULATION)

DIA(LOCAL) - EMPLOYEE WELFARE: FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, HARRASMENT, AND RETALIATION

Note: This policy addresses discrimination, harassment, and retaliation against District employees. For Title IX and other provisions regarding discrimination, harassment, and retaliation against students, see FFH. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

DEFINITIONS – Solely for purposes of this policy, the term “employee” includes former employees, applicants for employment, and unpaid interns.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION - The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

DISCRIMINATION - Discrimination against an employee is defined as conduct directed at an employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the employee’s employment.

In accordance with law, discrimination on the basis of sex includes discrimination on the basis of biological sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, gender stereotypes, or any other prohibited basis related to sex.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT - In this policy, the term “prohibited conduct” includes discrimination, harassment, and retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct. Prohibited conduct also includes sexual harassment as defined by Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)]

PROHIBITED HARASSMENT - Prohibited harassment of an employee is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on an employee’s race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the employee’s work performance;
2. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive work environment; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the employee’s performance, environment, or employment opportunities.

EXAMPLES - Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, gender identity, or need for workplace accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name calling, slurs, or rumors; cyberharassment; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

SEX-BASED HARASSMENT - As required by law, the District shall follow the procedures below at Response to Sexual Harassment—Title IX upon a report of sexbased harassment, including sexual harassment, when such allegations, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)]

SEXUAL HARASSMENT - Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination defined as unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to the conduct is either explicitly or implicitly a condition of an employee's employment, or when submission to or rejection of the conduct is the basis for an employment action affecting the employee; or
2. The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive work environment.

EXAMPLES - Examples of sexual harassment may include sexual advances; touching intimate body parts; coercing or forcing a sexual act on another; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, contact, or communication, including electronic communication.

REPORTING PROCEDURES - Any employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another employee has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts. The employee may report the alleged acts to his or her supervisor or campus principal.

Alternatively, the employee may report the alleged acts to one of the District officials below.

DEFINITION OF DISTRICT OFFICIALS - For the purposes of this policy, District officials are the Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and the Superintendent.

TITLE IX COORDINATOR - Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the designated Title IX coordinator. [See DIA(EXHIBIT)]

ADA / SECTION 504 COORDINATOR - Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the designated ADA/Section 504 coordinator. [See DIA(EXHIBIT)]

SUPERINTENDENT - The Superintendent shall serve as coordinator for purposes of District compliance with all other nondiscrimination laws.

ALTERNATIVE REPORTING PROCEDURES - An employee shall not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX coordinator or ADA/Section 504 coordinator, may be directed to the Superintendent.

A report against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board. If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.

TIMELY REPORTING - To ensure the District's prompt investigation, reports of prohibited conduct shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act.

NOTICE OF REPORT - Any District supervisor who receives a report of prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed above and take any other steps required by this policy.

Any District employee who receives a report of prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, shall immediately notify the Title IX coordinator.

INVESTIGATION OF REPORTS OTHER THAN TITLE IX - The following procedures apply to all allegations of prohibited conduct other than allegations of harassment prohibited by Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)] For allegations of sex-based harassment that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, see the procedures below at Response to Sexual Harassment—Title IX.

The District may request, but shall not require, a written report. If a report is made orally, the District official shall reduce the report to written form.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT - Upon receipt or notice of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proved, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the District shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation, regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending.

INTERIM ACTION - If appropriate, the District shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent prohibited conduct during the course of an investigation.

DISTRICT INVESTIGATION - The investigation may be conducted by the District official or a designee, such as the campus principal, or by a third party designated by the District, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the principal or supervisor shall be involved in or informed of the investigation.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.

CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION - Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the report; however, the investigator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall be filed with the District official overseeing the investigation.

DISTRICT ACTION - If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

The District may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the conduct did not rise to the level of prohibited or unlawful conduct

CONFIDENTIALITY - To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

APPEAL - A complainant who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through DGBA(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.

The complainant may have a right to file a complaint with appropriate state or federal agencies.

RESPONSE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT—TITLE IX - For purposes of the District’s response to reports of harassment prohibited by Title IX, definitions can be found in FFH(LEGAL).

GENERAL RESPONSE - When the District receives notice or an allegation of conduct that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, the Title IX coordinator shall promptly contact the complainant to:

- Discuss the availability of supportive measures and inform the complainant that they are available, with or without the filing of a formal complaint;
- Consider the complainant’s wishes with respect to supportive measures; and
- Explain to the complainant the option and process for filing a formal complaint.

The District’s response to sexual harassment shall treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures to both parties, as appropriate, and by following the

Title IX formal complaint process before imposing disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.

If a formal complaint is not filed, the District reserves the right to investigate and respond to prohibited conduct in accordance with Board policies and administrative procedures.

TITLE IX FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS - To distinguish the process described below from the District's general grievance policies [see DGBA, FNG, and GF], this policy refers to the grievance process required by Title IX regulations for responding to formal complaints of sexual harassment as the District's "Title IX formal complaint process."

The Superintendent shall ensure the development of a Title IX formal complaint process that complies with legal requirements. [See FFH(LEGAL)] The formal complaint process shall be posted on the District's website. In compliance with Title IX regulations, the District's Title IX formal complaint process shall address the following basic requirements:

1. Equitable treatment of complainants and respondents;
2. An objective evaluation of all relevant evidence;
3. A requirement that the Title IX coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or any person designated to facilitate an informal resolution process not have a conflict of interest or bias;
4. A presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged sexual harassment until a determination is made at the conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process;
5. Time frames that provide for a reasonably prompt conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process, including time frames for appeals and any informal resolution process, and that allow for temporary delays or the limited extension of time frames with good cause and written notice as required by law;
6. A description of the possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies that may be implemented following a determination of responsibility for the alleged sexual harassment;
7. A statement of the standard of evidence to be used to determine responsibility for all Title IX formal complaints of sexual harassment;
8. Procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal a determination of responsibility or a dismissal of a Title IX formal complaint or any allegations therein;

9. A description of the supportive measures available to the complainant and respondent;
10. A prohibition on using or seeking information protected under a legally recognized privilege unless the individual holding the privilege has waived the privilege;
11. Additional formal complaint procedures in 34 C.F.R. 106.45(b), including written notice of a formal complaint, consolidation of formal complaints, recordkeeping, and investigation procedures; and
12. Other local procedures as determined by the Superintendent.

STANDARD OF EVIDENCE - The standard of evidence used to determine responsibility in a Title IX formal complaint of sexual harassment shall be the preponderance of the evidence.

RETALIATION - The District prohibits retaliation against an employee who makes a claim alleging to have experienced discrimination or harassment, or another employee who, in good faith, makes a report of harassment or discrimination, files a complaint of harassment or discrimination, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates or refuses to participate in an investigation.

EXAMPLES - Examples of retaliation may include termination, refusal to hire, demotion, and denial of promotion. Retaliation may also include threats, intimidation, coercion, unjustified negative evaluations, unjustified negative references, or increased surveillance.

RECORDS RETENTION - The District shall retain copies of allegations, investigation reports, and related records regarding any prohibited conduct in accordance with the District's records control schedules, but for no less than the minimum amount of time required by law. [See CPC]

[For Title IX recordkeeping and retention provisions, see FFH(LEGAL) and the District's Title IX formal complaint process.]

ACCESS TO POLICY AND PROCEDURES - Information regarding this policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually to District employees. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's website, to the extent practicable, and readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

DIA (REGULATION) – EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT: SEXUAL HARASSMENT/SEXUAL ABUSE

The following are guidelines for the reporting and conducting of an investigation of a complaint pertaining to sexual harassment.

Initial Report: Any District employee who receives a complaint of sexual harassment shall immediately report the alleged act to the building principal or appropriate administrator of the facility in which said act is alleged to have occurred. The building principal or appropriate administrator of any facility shall be responsible upon receipt of any such report to immediately report the same to the Title IX Coordinator and Superintendent.

Depending on the allegation, District employees may additionally be required to report the complaint to third-part agents, law enforcement of other state agencies. Should the employee have questions pertaining to the obligation to make said report, then he/she should consult with his/her immediate supervisor or District officials.

Written Complaint: The building principal or other person receiving the complaint should attempt to have the same reduced to writing within 24 hours of the initial report. In the event that the complaint is against an employee of the District, then the complaint may be on form Sexual Harassment Report Form, DIA (EXHIBIT)A. In the event that the complaint is against a student, the complaint may also be made on DIA (EXHIBIT)A and/or the District's Disciplinary Action Report form. Copies of any complaint, whether involving employee-to-employee or employee-to-student conduct, shall immediately be forwarded to the Title IX Coordinator and Superintendent.

Use of formal reporting forms is not mandatory.

Investigations: Complaints Against an Employee: By authority of the District, the Title IX Coordinator, upon receipt of a complaint against an employee of the District, shall immediately authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by District officials or by a third party designated by the District.

To the extent possible, all the investigations shall be completed within 30 calendar days of receipt of the complaint. If a third party does the investigation, a copy of the investigation shall be given to the Title IX Coordinator and Superintendent. To the extent allowed by law, written notification of the outcome of the investigation shall be given to both the complainant and the accused. If the complaint involves a student, a copy of the final report of the investigation will be given to the parents of the student.

Notification of the outcome of the investigation of an employee shall be in writing and shall include the following statement:

"If you are not satisfied with the District's initial response to the complaint, you may appeal to the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee will hold a conference with you and attempt to resolve the situation. If you still feel that the problem has not been resolved, please be advised that you may have this matter placed on the agenda of a meeting of the Ector County Independent School District Board of Trustees for their consideration."

Grievance Procedures: Nothing in this regulation is intended to diminish or otherwise impair any grievance procedures in grievance policy or procedures that a person may be entitled to under the policies and regulations of the District.

Harassment of Students

Policies DF, DH, DHB, FFG, FFH, FFI

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 child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. See *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*, page 81 and *Bullying*, page 111 for additional information.

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

[**DHB \(LEGAL\) Employee Standards of Conduct: Reports to State Board for Educator Certification**](#)

DHB(LEGAL) – EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT: REPORTS TO STATE BOARD FOR EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION

Note: This policy applies to a district of innovation under Education Code, Chapter 12A. [See AF]

Permissive Reports: The superintendent may notify the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) of any educator misconduct that he or she believes in good faith may be subject to

sanctions under 19 Administrative Code, Chapter 249, Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases, and/or Chapter 247, Educators' Code of Ethics. 19 TAC 249.14(d)

Required Reports: A superintendent shall notify SBEC if:

1. An educator employed by or seeking employment with the district, or an applicant or holder of an SBEC certificate, has a criminal record and the district obtained information about the educator's criminal record by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse established by the Texas Department of Public Safety under Government Code 411.0845;
2. An educator's employment at the district was terminated and there is evidence that the educator engaged in misconduct listed below [see Reportable Misconduct, below];
3. The educator submitted a notice of resignation and there is evidence that the educator engaged in misconduct listed below [see Reportable Misconduct, below]; or
4. The educator engaged in conduct that violated the assessment instrument security procedures established under Education Code 39.0301.

Education Code 21.006, 22.087; 19 TAC 249.14(d)

Reportable Misconduct: A superintendent shall make a report to SBEC under items 2 and 3, above, if an educator was terminated or resigned and there is evidence that the educator:

1. Sexually or physically abused a student or minor or engaged in any other illegal conduct with a student or minor;
2. Possessed, transferred, sold, or distributed a controlled substance, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 481 or by 21 U.S.C. 801 et seq.;
3. Illegally transferred, appropriated, or expended school property or funds;
4. Attempted by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle the individual to be employed in a position requiring such certificate or permit or to receive additional compensation associated with a position;
5. Committed a crime, any part of such crime having occurred on school property or at a school-sponsored event; or
6. Solicited or engaged in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.

Education Code 21.006(b); 19 TAC 249.14(d)

Investigation: A superintendent shall complete an investigation of an educator that involves evidence that the educator may have engaged in misconduct described above at Reportable Misconduct, items 1 and 6, despite the educator's resignation from employment before completion of the investigation. Education Code 21.006(b-1); 19 TAC 249.14(d)(3)(C)

Deadline to Report: The superintendent shall promptly notify SBEC in writing by filing a report within seven business days after the date the superintendent receives a report from a principal [see DP(LEGAL)] or knew of the circumstances described above. Education Code 21.006(c); 19 TAC 249.14(d) [See Required Reports, above]

Contents of Report: The report must be in writing and in a form prescribed by SBEC and may be filed through a confidential and secure internet portal developed and maintained by SBEC. The report shall include the name or names of any student or minor who is the victim of abuse or unlawful conduct by an educator and the factual circumstances requiring the report and the subject of the report by providing the following available information:

1. Name and any aliases;
2. Certificate number, if any, or social security number;
3. Last known mailing address and home and daytime phone numbers;
4. All available contact information for any alleged victim or victims;
5. Name or names and any available contact information of any relevant witnesses to the circumstances requiring the report;
6. Current employment status of the subject, including any information about proposed termination, notice of resignation, or pending employment actions; and
7. Involvement by a law enforcement or other agency, including the name of the agency.

Education Code 21.006(c-1); 19 TAC 249.14(f)

The name of the student or minor is not public information under the Public Information Act. [See GBAA] Education Code 21.006(h)

Notice to the Board and Educator: A superintendent shall notify the board and the educator of the filing of a written report with SBEC. The superintendent shall notify the board before filing the report. Education Code 21.006(d); 19 TAC 249.14(d)(3)(B)

Notice Before Accepting Resignation: Before accepting an employee's resignation that requires filing a report, the superintendent shall inform the educator in writing that a report will be filed and that sanctions against his or her certificate may result as a consequence. 19 TAC 249.14(d)(3)(A)

Exception to Notice Requirements: A superintendent is not required to notify SBEC or file a report with the board if, before the educator's termination or resignation, the superintendent:

1. Completes an investigation into an alleged incident of misconduct for:
 - (a) Abuse or unlawful act with a student or minor; or
 - (b) Involvement in a romantic relationship with or solicitation or engagement in sexual contact with a student or minor; and
2. Determines the educator did not engage in the alleged incident of misconduct.

Education Code 21.006(c-2); 19 TAC 249.14(d)

Policy to Notify Parents: The board shall adopt a policy under which notice is provided to the parent or guardian of a student with whom an educator is alleged to have abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor. [See FFF] Education Code 21.0061

Sanctions for Failure to Report: SBEC shall determine whether to impose sanctions, including an administrative penalty against a superintendent who fails to file a report. Education Code 21.006(f); 19 TAC 249.14(d), (h), .15(b)(4)

Administrative Penalty: If a superintendent is required to file a report and fails to file the report by the required date, SBEC may impose an administrative penalty of not less than \$500 and not more than \$10,000. SBEC may not renew the certification of an educator against whom an administrative penalty is imposed until the penalty is paid. Education Code 21.006(i)

Criminal Offense: A superintendent required to file a report commits a state jail felony if the superintendent fails to file the report by the required date with intent to conceal an educator's criminal record or alleged incident of misconduct. Education Code 21.006(j)

Immunity: A superintendent or principal who, in good faith and while acting in an official capacity, files a report with SBEC or communicates with another superintendent or principal

concerning an educator's criminal record or alleged incident of misconduct is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Education Code 21.006(e)

Definitions: "Abuse" includes the following acts or omissions:

1. Mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
2. Causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
3. Physical injury that results in substantial harm to a student or minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the student or minor, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline; or
4. Sexual conduct harmful to a student's or minor's mental, emotional, or physical welfare.

19 TAC 249.3(1)

Reported Criminal History: "Reported criminal history" means information concerning any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions. The term includes arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal information, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction. 19 TAC 249.3(44)

Solicitation of a Romantic Relationship: "Solicitation of a romantic relationship" means deliberate or repeated acts that can be reasonably interpreted as the solicitation by an educator of a relationship with a student that is romantic in nature. A romantic relationship is often characterized by a strong emotional or sexual attachment and/or patterns of exclusivity, but does not include appropriate educator-student relationships that arise out of legitimate contexts such as familial connections or longtime acquaintance. The following acts, considered in context, may constitute prima facie evidence of the solicitation by an educator of a romantic relationship with a student:

1. Behavior, gestures, expressions, or communications with a student that are unrelated to the educator's job duties and evidence a romantic intent or interest in the student, including statements of love, affection, or attraction. Factors that may be considered in determining the romantic intent of such communications or behavior include:

- a) The nature of the communications;
 - b) The timing of the communications;
 - c) The extent of the communications;
 - d) Whether the communications were made openly or secretly;
 - e) The extent that the educator attempts to conceal the communications;
 - f) If the educator claims to be counseling a student, SBEC may consider whether the educator’s job duties included counseling, whether the educator reported the subject of the counseling to the student’s guardians or to the appropriate school personnel, or, in the case of alleged abuse or neglect, whether the educator reported the abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities; and
 - g) Any other evidence tending to show the context of the communications between educator and student.
2. Making inappropriate comments about a student’s body, creating or transmitting sexually suggestive photographs or images, or encouraging the student to transmit sexually suggestive photographs or images.
 3. Making sexually demeaning comments to a student.
 4. Making comments about a student’s potential sexual performance.
 5. Requesting details of a student’s sexual history.
 6. Requesting a date, sexual contact, or any activity intended for the sexual gratification of the educator.
 7. Engaging in conversations regarding the sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party.
 8. Inappropriate hugging, kissing, or excessive touching.
 9. Providing the student with drugs or alcohol.
 10. Violating written directives from school administrators regarding the educator's behavior toward a student.

11. Suggestions that a romantic relationship is desired after the student graduates, including post-graduation plans for dating or marriage.
12. Any other acts tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with the student.

19 TAC 249.3(51)

The link to and reprint of the district’s policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students is below:

[**POLICY FFH \(LOCAL\) STUDENT WELFARE: FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION**](#)

FFH(LOCAL) – STUDENT WELFARE: FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, HARRASMENT, AND RETALIATION

Note: This policy addresses discrimination, including harassment, and retaliation against District students. For provisions regarding discrimination, including harassment, and retaliation against District employees, see DIA. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG. Note that FFH shall be used in conjunction with FFI (bullying) for certain prohibited conduct.

Prohibited Conduct: In this policy, the term “prohibited conduct” includes discrimination, harassment, dating violence, and retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

Prohibited conduct also includes sexual harassment as defined by Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)]

Statement of Nondiscrimination: The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student. Discrimination is defined as treating a student or group of students differently from similarly situated students on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. One type of harassment this policy prohibits is dating violence, as defined below. Retaliation against anyone exercising their rights under this policy is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

Harassment: Harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student’s race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Harassment includes dating violence as defined by law and this policy.

Examples - Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct; offensive jokes, name calling, slurs, or rumors; cyberharassment; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Title IX Sexual Harassment: As required by law, the District shall follow the procedures below at Response to Title IX Sexual Harassment upon a report of sexbased harassment, including sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, and dating violence, when such allegations, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment in an education program or activity and against a person in the United States under Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)]

Other Sexual Harassment By an Employee - Sexual harassment of a student by a District employee includes both welcome and unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

1. A District employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
2. The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:
 - a. Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities; or
 - b. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

Romantic or other inappropriate social relationships between students and District employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a District employee is always prohibited, even if consensual. [See DH]

Other Sexual Harassment By Others: Sexual harassment of a student, including harassment committed by another student, includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples - Examples of sexual harassment of a student may include sexual advances; touching intimate body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, contact, or communications, including electronic communication.

Necessary or permissible physical contact such as assisting a child by taking the child's hand, comforting a child with a hug, or other physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature is not sexual harassment.

Gender-Based Harassment: Gender-based harassment includes physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's gender, the student's expression of characteristics perceived as stereotypical for the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. For purposes of this policy, gender-based harassment is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples - Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; cyberharassment; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Dating Violence: Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense.

For purposes of this policy, dating violence is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples - Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults; name-calling; put-downs; or threats directed at the student, the student's family members, or members of the student's household. Additional examples may include destroying property belonging to the student, threatening to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempting to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, threatening a student's spouse or current dating partner, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

Reporting Procedures Student Report: Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct and any person who believes that a student has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, school counselor, principal, other District employee, or the appropriate District official listed in this policy.

Reporting Procedures Employee Report: 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 shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed in this policy and take any other steps required by this policy.

Definition of District Officials: For the purposes of this policy, District officials are the Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and the Superintendent.

Title IX Coordinator: Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, or dating violence, may be directed to the designated Title IX coordinator for students. [See FFH(EXHIBIT)]

ADA / Section 504 Coordinator: Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the designated ADA/Section 504 coordinator for students. [See FFH(EXHIBIT)]

Superintendent: The Superintendent shall serve as coordinator for purposes of District compliance with all other nondiscrimination laws.

Alternative Reporting Procedures: An individual shall not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX coordinator or ADA/Section 504 coordinator, may be directed to the Superintendent.

A report against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board. If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.

Timely Reporting: To ensure the District's prompt investigation, reports of prohibited conduct shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act.

Notice to Parents: The District official or designee shall promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct by a District employee or another adult. [For parental notification requirements regarding an allegation of educator misconduct with a student, see FFF.]

When the District receives a report of prohibited conduct that includes dating violence, the appropriate District official shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the student who has been identified in the report as the alleged victim or perpetrator.

Investigation of Reports Other Than Title IX: The following procedures apply to all allegations of prohibited conduct other than allegations of harassment prohibited by Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)] For allegations of sex-based harassment that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, including sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, and dating violence, see the procedures below at Response to Title IX Sexual Harassment.

The District may request, but shall not require, a written report. If a report is made orally, the District official shall reduce the report to written form.

Initial Assessment: Upon receipt or notice of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proved, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the District shall immediately undertake an investigation, except as provided below at Criminal Investigation.

If the District official determines that the allegations, if proved, would not constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy, the District official shall refer the complaint for consideration under FFI.

Interim Action: If appropriate and regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the alleged conduct is pending, the District shall promptly take interim action calculated to address prohibited conduct or bullying prior to the completion of the District's investigation.

District Investigation: The investigation may be conducted by the District official or a designee, such as the principal, or by a third party designated by the District, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the principal shall be involved in or informed of the investigation.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.

Criminal Investigation: If a law enforcement or regulatory agency notifies the District that a criminal or regulatory investigation has been initiated, the District shall confer with the agency to determine if the District investigation would impede the criminal or regulatory investigation. The District shall proceed with its investigation only to the extent that it does not impede the ongoing criminal or regulatory investigation. After the law enforcement or regulatory agency has finished gathering its evidence, the District shall promptly resume its investigation.

Concluding the Investigation: Absent extenuating circumstances, such as a request by a law enforcement or regulatory agency for the District to delay its investigation, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the report; however, the investigator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether prohibited conduct or bullying occurred. The report shall be filed with the District official overseeing the investigation.

Notification of Outcome: Notification of the outcome of the investigation shall be provided to both parties in compliance with FERPA.

District Action Prohibited Conduct: If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

Corrective Action: Examples of corrective action may include a training program for those involved in the report, a comprehensive education program for the school community,

counseling to the victim and the student who engaged in prohibited conduct, follow-up inquiries to determine if any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where prohibited conduct has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against discrimination and harassment.

Bullying: If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, as defined by FFI, the District official shall refer to FFI for appropriate notice to parents and District action. The District official shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.

Improper Conduct: If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or other corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

Confidentiality: To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

Appeal: A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level. A student or parent has the right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

Response to Title IX Sexual Harassment: For purposes of the District's response to reports of harassment prohibited by Title IX, definitions can be found in FFH(LEGAL).

General Response: When the District receives notice or an allegation of conduct that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, the Title IX coordinator shall promptly contact the complainant to:

- Discuss the availability of supportive measures and inform the complainant that they are available, with or without the filing of a formal complaint;
- Consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; and
- Explain to the complainant the option and process for filing a formal complaint.

The District's response to sexual harassment shall treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures to both parties, as appropriate, and by following the Title IX formal complaint process before imposing disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.

If a formal complaint is not filed or dismissed, the District reserves the right to investigate and respond to prohibited conduct in accordance with Board policies and the Student Code of Conduct. The Title IX coordinator also reserves the right to sign a formal complaint, initiating

the Title IX grievance process, if it would be deliberately indifferent no to investigate and respond to the prohibited conduct in accordance with Board policies and the Student Code of Conduct.

Title IX Formal Complaint Process: To distinguish the process described below from the District's general grievance policies [see DGBA, FNG, and GF], this policy refers to the grievance process required by Title IX regulations for responding to formal complaints of sexual harassment as the District's "Title IX formal complaint process."

The Superintendent shall ensure the development of a Title IX formal complaint process that complies with legal requirements. [See FFH(LEGAL)] The formal complaint process shall be posted on the District's website. In compliance with Title IX regulations, the District's Title IX formal complaint process shall address the following basic requirements:

1. Equitable treatment of complainants and respondents;
2. An objective evaluation of all relevant evidence;
3. A requirement that the Title IX coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or any person designated to facilitate an informal resolution process not have a conflict of interest or bias;
4. A presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged sexual harassment until a determination is made at the conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process;
5. Time frames that provide for a reasonably prompt conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process, including time frames for appeals and any informal resolution process, and that allow for temporary delays or the limited extension of time frames with good cause and written notice as required by law;
6. A description of the possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies that may be implemented following a determination of responsibility for the alleged sexual harassment;
7. A statement of the standard of evidence to be used to determine responsibility for all Title IX formal complaints of sexual harassment;
8. Procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal a determination of responsibility or a dismissal of a Title IX formal complaint or any allegations therein;
9. A description of the supportive measures available to the complainant and respondent;

10. A prohibition on using or seeking information protected under a legally recognized privilege unless the individual holding the privilege has waived the privilege;
11. Additional formal complaint procedures in 34 C.F.R. 106.45(b), including written notice of a formal complaint, consolidation of formal complaints, recordkeeping, and investigation procedures; and
12. Other local procedures as determined by the Superintendent.

Standard of Evidence: The standard of evidence used to determine responsibility in a Title IX formal complaint of sexual harassment shall be the preponderance of the evidence.

Retaliation: The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, or another student who, in good faith, makes a report of harassment or discrimination, files a complaint of harassment or discrimination, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation. The definition of prohibited retaliation under this policy also includes retaliation against a student who refuses to participate in any manner in an investigation under Title IX. In the absence of a formal complaint, allegations of retaliation shall be investigated under Investigation of Reports Other Than Title IX, above.

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

False Claim: A student who intentionally makes a false claim or offers false statements in a District investigation regarding discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with law.

Records Retention: The District shall retain copies of allegations, investigation reports, and related records regarding any prohibited conduct in accordance with the District's records control schedules, but for no less than the minimum amount of time required by law. [See CPC]

[For Title IX recordkeeping and retention provisions, see FFH(LEGAL) and the District's Title IX formal complaint process.]

Access to Policy and Procedures: Information regarding this policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's website, to the extent practicable, and readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

FFH (REGULATION) – STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: SEXUAL HARRASMENT/SEXUAL ABUSE

[FFH\(REGULATION\) Student Rights and Responsibilities - Sexual Harassment.pdf - Google Drive](#)

Note: The procedures below address allegations of prohibited conduct *other than* allegations of sexual harassment prohibited by Title IX. [See FFH] For TASB’s Title IX model procedures, see TASB Legal Services’ eSource.ⁱ

For provisions regarding bullying, see FFI. Note that FFH should be used in conjunction with FFI for conjunction with FFI for certain alleged conduct.

Please see the student handbook for further information and resources on child sexual abuse, including awareness, prevention, and appropriate action.

Initial Assessment: Except for allegations of conduct that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, the following guidelines apply when assessing student complaints of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation committed by an employee or another adult associated with the District or a complaint of student-to-student harassment or dating violence when the allegations presented, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by District policy at FFH.

In the event that the allegations, if proven, would not constitute prohibited conduct as defined by District policy at FFH, the Superintendent or designee may then need to refer to policies and procedures at FFI, regarding bullying, or the Student Code of Conduct for other improper conduct.

Investigative Procedures: The investigator must maintain confidentiality to the extent possible and as allowed by law and must advise the complainant that limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. Records of the investigation must be maintained in accordance with FB(LOCAL)

General Consideration: If possible, when investigating allegations of discrimination and/or gender-based harassment, the investigator should be the same sex as the student. During the investigative process, the student to be permitted to be accompanied by a parent, friend, or advisor.

In the course of the investigation, the investigator may also need to determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying as defined by District policy. If the allegations would constitute bullying, the investigator will need to make a determination about the bullying incident in accordance with policies and procedures at FFI.

Investigative Procedures:

In conducting the investigation, the investigator will:

1. Take immediate action to protect the student from the alleged situation.
2. Notify parents of the allegations, explain to them the purpose of the investigation, and keep them apprised during the process.
3. Assure complainant of protection from retaliation.
4. Advise complainant that the District does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, dating violence, or retaliation and help the complainant feel secure about presenting allegations of wrongdoing.
5. Notify Child Protective Services of the Department of Family and Protective Services or local law enforcement within 48 hours, if there is a cause to believe the student has been sexually abused or neglected or has been a victim of indecency with a child.
6. If a law enforcement or regulatory agency notifies the District that a criminal or regulatory investigation has been initiated, confer with the agency to determine if the District investigation would impede the criminal or regulatory investigation and proceed only to the extent that the District's investigation does not impede the ongoing agency investigation. After the law enforcement or regulatory agency has
7. Reduce all complaints to writing. If the student refuses to make or sign a written complaint, the administrator will carefully document the allegations in writing and record the date and circumstances of the interview.
8. Take a sworn statement if at all possible.
9. Secure any physical evidence.
10. Interview the complainant first, proceeding chronologically through the allegations.
11. Interview the alleged victim, if that person is not also the complainant. Assure the alleged victim of protection from retaliation.
12. Interview any witnesses.

13. Maintain detailed notes of all interviews. Notes will be read to witnesses to verify details and to ensure accuracy. Record facts, not conclusions. In addition, the interviewer may audio-record the interview.
14. Develop a summary of interview notes, which should be signed by a witness to verify the accuracy of their statements. If a witness declines to sign the summary or to allow the use of his or her name, the interviewer will note that restriction and retain the unsigned document.
15. Interview the alleged harasser and take a written or sworn statement, if possible. The alleged harasser will be presented with all allegations and allowed the opportunity to respond to each.
16. Advise the alleged harasser that retaliation against the victim or any witnesses is strictly prohibited by the District's sexual harassment policy.
17. Not concede the truth or falsehood of the allegations during the course of the investigation.
18. Not divulge information regarding the identity of the victim or alleged perpetrator unnecessarily when interviewing other witnesses.
19. Document all efforts made to investigate the alleged abuse or harassment.
20. If alleged harasser is a District employee, complete the investigation even if the employee resigns from employment before completion of the investigation.
21. Prepare a written report of the investigation.

Investigation Report: The Superintendent or designee will communicate the results of the investigation to the alleged victim, the alleged victim's parents, the alleged harasser, and the alleged harasser's parents, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The investigation report should include any determinations made by the investigator regarding prohibited conduct and bullying and the actions to be taken in response to such determinations.

Dismissal of Complaint: If upon completion of the investigation, the investigator determines that dismissal of the complaint is warranted, he or she will follow up with the alleged victim, the alleged harasser, the complainant, and the witnesses, if possible, to ensure that behavior giving rise to the allegations does not recur.

The investigator will advise the alleged victim and his or her parents, the harasser, and the complainant of their right to appeal the investigator's decision through the student complaint

process at FNG(LOCAL), beginning at Level Two, as well as notify them of their right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

Disciplinary Action Against a Student: If upon completion of the investigation the investigator determines that disciplinary action against a student is warranted, the investigator will proceed with the appropriate course of action, in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct.

Disciplinary Against an Employee: If, upon completion of the investigation, the investigator determines that misconduct occurred or disciplinary action against an employee is warranted, the investigator will notify the principal and the Superintendent.

Principal Report to Superintendent: Within timelines established by law, a principal must notify the Superintendent about an employee's termination or resignation following an allegation of certain misconduct under law. (See DF, DP)

Superintendent Report to SBEC: Within timelines established by law, the Superintendent must notify TEA's Division of Educator Investigations upon gaining knowledge about an employee's termination or resignation when there is evidence of certain misconduct under law or upon receiving the above required notification from the principal. (See DF, DHB, DHC)

Note: Information regarding Superintendent Reporting Requirements can be found on TEA's website.

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 abuse 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 concerns 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 FFG (LEGAL) and (LOCAL). 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 has reasonable cause to believe 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 following 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 networks, computer systems, email accounts, devices connected to its networks, and all district-owned devices used on or off school property, 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 technology 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 are required to abide by the provisions of the district's acceptable use agreement and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the Technology Department.

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES CQ (EXHIBIT)C

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. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to Dr. Matthew Spivy, Executive Director of Human Resources.

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 online at [Ector County ISD Board Policy Manual - Policy Online \(tasb.org\)](#)

District regulations can be accessed online at [Administrative Regulations - Ector County Independent School District \(ectorcountysd.org\)](#)

EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

You are being given access to the District's technology resources. Through this system, you will be able to communicate with other schools, colleges, organizations, and people around the world through the Internet and other technology resources/networks. You will have access to hundreds of databases, libraries, and computer services all over the world.

With this opportunity comes responsibility. It is important that you read the District policy, administrative regulations, and agreement form and ask questions if you need help in understanding them. Inappropriate system use will result in suspension or revocation of the privilege of using this educational and administrative tool.

Please note that the Internet is a network of many types of communication and information networks. It is possible that you may run across some material you might find objectionable. While the District will use filtering technology to restrict access to such material, it is not possible to absolutely prevent such access. It will be your responsibility to follow the rules for appropriate use.

RULES FOR APPROPRIATE USE

- The account is to be used mainly for educational purposes, but limited personal use is permitted.
- You will be held responsible at all times for the proper use of your account, and the District may suspend or revoke your access if you violate the rules.
- Remember that people who receive e-mail from you with a school address might think your message represents the school's point of view.

INAPPROPRIATE USES

- Using the system for any illegal purpose.
- Disabling, bypassing or attempting to disable any Internet filtering device.
- Encrypting communications to avoid security review.
- Borrowing someone else's account without permission.
- Pretending to be someone else when transmitting or receiving messages.
- Using inappropriate language such as swear words, vulgarity, ethnic or racial slurs, and any other inflammatory language.
- Downloading or using copyrighted information without permission from the copyright holder.
- Intentionally introducing a virus to the computer system.
- Transmitting or accessing materials that is abusive, obscene, sexually oriented threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.
- Transmitting pictures without obtaining prior permission from all individuals depicted, or from parents or depicted individuals who are under the age of 18.
- Posting messages or accessing materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.
- Wasting school resources through improper use of the computer system, including sending chain letters.
- Gaining unauthorized access to restricted information or resources.

- Using personal internet connections for students or direct instruction.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE

- Suspension of access to the system;
- Revocation of the computer system account; or
- Other disciplinary or legal action, in accordance with the District policies and applicable laws.

EMPLOYEE DATA MANAGEMENT AND USER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

This section applies for employees who currently use or will use an ECISD online database system. ECISD online database systems include but are not limited to such systems as iTCCS, txGradebook, MUNIS, KRONOS and Eduphoria. The opportunity to use this system will provide effective and efficient data management with the online maintenance and/or read-only access to student, personnel and/or business applications. With this opportunity comes responsibility due to the extremely sensitive/confidential nature of this data.

Access to the ECISD online databases is for professional school use only. You will be held responsible at all times for the proper use of this account, and access may be suspended or revoked if you violate any of the terms of this agreement. Any disclosure by verbal or written means, copying, distribution, or use of the information in the database by an unauthorized person is prohibited. With the exception of documents produced from the system specifically designed for release to individuals or groups in the public, the information is not to be shared with person/s outside of ECISD.

Access to the databases from outside the workplace/ECISD network is a privilege offered to ECISD exempt personnel only. Access to databases by non-exempt personnel from outside the workplace/ECISD network is prohibited in an effort to prevent potential problems stemming from FLSA regulations.

Those exempt personnel who access their login information from outside of the ECISD network assume the responsibility for resolving connectivity problems. It is not within the scope of responsibilities of either the Information Systems Department or the Information Technology Department to resolve connectivity problems or to trouble shoot response time issues or any other issues that are incurred outside of the ECISD network.

- A. To this end, this agreement is incorporated as part of the overall ECISD Employee Agreement for Acceptable Use of Electronic Communications and Data Management Systems.
- B. The user understands that any user ID and password assigned for access to databases is to be considered private and confidential and that sharing user IDs and/or passwords is

prohibited. The user understands that using someone else's account is prohibited.

- C. The user is responsible for any computer transactions performed as a result of access authorized through his user ID and password.
- D. The user is responsible for changing his/her password if he/she suspects that it has been compromised.
- E. The user will not intentionally or knowingly enter any unauthorized data or change any data without authorization.
- F. The user understands that confidential information includes, but is not limited to, any information that has the potential to identify a student, including aggregates with fewer than five members; social security numbers for students or staff; and e-mail addresses of members of the public.
- G. The user agrees that access and viewing of confidential data will be limited to the purpose intended by the application.
- H. The user agrees to monitor and protect confidential information.
- I. The user understands that any unauthorized disclosure of confidential student information is illegal as provided in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and in the implementing of federal regulations found in 34 CFR, Part 99. FERPA is specially incorporated into the Texas Open Records Act as an exception to records that are subject to disclosures to the public (Government Code, Section 552.026). The user understands that release of confidential student information is prohibited by the Texas Government Code, Section 552.352, and that such an offense constitutes a Class A misdemeanor.
- J. The user understands that any data sets or output reports that he/she may generate using confidential data shall be protected. The user shall not distribute to any unauthorized person any data sets or reports that contains confidential data.
- K. The user certifies that the information contained in this form with which this agreement is declared is, to the best of his/her knowledge, correct and that he has been duly authorized to access this confidential information. User further certifies that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance with all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations.

The employee agreement shall be renewed each academic year.

I understand that my computer use is not private and that the District may monitor my activity on the computer system at any time.

I have read the District's Electronic Communications system policy CQ(LOCAL) and CQ (Regulations) and agree to abide by their provisions. I understand that the policy can be located on the ECISD website at: <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/421>

In consideration of the privilege of using the District's electronic communications system and in consideration for having access to the public networks, I hereby release the District, its operators, and any institutions with which they are affiliated from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my use of, or inability to use, the system, including, without limitation, the type of damages identified in the District's policy and administrative regulations including the transfer of files between home and District workstations.

NOTE: Signature Acknowledgement will be completed via the Employee Self-Service (ESS) system. Employees will receive an email notification to complete.

Personal Use of Electronic Communications

Policy CQ, DH

Electronic communications include all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (email), weblogs (blogs), wikis, electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube, TikTok), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram). Electronic communications also include 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 web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

An employee who uses electronic communications 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 Texas Educators’ Code of Ethics, 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 DH(EXHIBIT)]
 - Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private email 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 DH(EXHIBIT)]

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

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 use 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 the 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 the 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 website.
- *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 Media*, 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 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 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. An employee may, however, 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 Texas Educators’ Code of Ethics 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 one or more currently-enrolled students.

- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through email, 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.
- All staff are required to use school email accounts for all electronic communications with parents. Communication about school issues through personal email accounts or text messages are not allowed as they cannot be preserved in accordance with the district's record retention policy.
- An employee shall notify his or supervisor in writing within one business day if a student engages in an improper electronic communication with the employee. The employee should describe the form and content of the electronic communication.

[DH \(Exhibit\)B - Employee Standards of Conduct - Communications with Students](#)

DH(EXHIBIT) B – EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Employee's name (print): _____

Indicate the electronic communications tool(s) that you would like to use:

I do not use any type of electronic communication with students.

Text (must include parent receipt)

E-mail

Messages through District approved websites, including social media or social networking websites

Other

If other, please describe here: _____

Provide a brief description of the class/group that will be using the electronic communication tool and the purpose of the intended use. _____

Indicate whether the electronic communications tool listed above will be open to the school community, limited to a particular class or particular grade or group within the school, or open to a larger community.

(Check only one)

Open within the school community

Limited (indicate which class, grade, or group has access)

Open to larger community

Explain: _____

Please verify that the electronic communications tool indicated above, and your use of the tool complies with relevant District policies and regulations and that you have reviewed these policies and regulations to determine whether it is appropriate for use by your intended audience. In addition, verify that you have reviewed with your students the policies and guidelines relating to acceptable use of electronic communications. [See CQ and DH]

Employee's Signature: _____

Employee's mobile number that will be used for this purpose: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use Only

Approved

Denied

Reason if denied: _____

Principal's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Public Information on Private Devices

Policy DH, GB

Employees should not maintain district information on privately owned devices. Any district information must be forwarded or transferred to the district to be preserved. The district will

take reasonable efforts to obtain public information in compliance with the Public Information Act. Reasonable efforts may include:

- Verbal or written directive
- Remote access to district-owned devices and services

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, DHB, DHC

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)
- Acts constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code.

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

Certified Employees. The superintendent and directors are required to report the misconduct or criminal history of a certified employee or individual applying for certification or permit to TEA Division of Educator Investigations. Information about misconduct or allegations of misconduct of a certified employee obtained by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse that results in termination, resignation, or criminal history (e.g., arrest, indictment, prosecution, conviction, or other disposition by the criminal justice system, including probation and deferred adjudication) will be reported to TEA.

Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:

- Abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor
- Possessed, transferred, sold, or distributed a controlled substance
- Illegally transferred, appropriated, or expended school property or funds
- Attempted by fraudulent means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit to gain employment or additional compensation
- Committed a criminal offense on school property or at a school-sponsored event, or
- Solicited or engaged in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor

Uncertified Employees. Misconduct or criminal history of an uncertified employee also must be reported to TEA. Information about misconduct or the allegations of misconduct obtained by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse that results in termination, resignation, or

criminal history (e.g., arrest, indictment, prosecution, conviction, or other disposition by the criminal justice system, including probation and deferred adjudication) will be reported to TEA.

Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:

- Abuse or unlawful act with a student or minor, or
- Involvement in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor

Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention

Policy DH

Ector County 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\(LOCAL\) - EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT \(tasb.org\)](#)

Alcohol and Drugs/Notice of Drug-Free Workplace: An employee shall not manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances during working hours while on District property or at school-related activities during or outside of usual working hours:

1. Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
2. Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.
3. Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation.
4. Any other intoxicant or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drug.

An employee need not be legally intoxicated to be considered "under the influence" of a controlled substance.

Exceptions: It shall not be considered a violation of this policy if the employee:

1. Manufactures, possesses, or dispenses a substance listed above as part of the employee's job responsibilities;

2. Uses or possesses a controlled substance or drug authorized by a licensed physician prescribed for the employee's personal use; or
3. Possesses a controlled substance or drug that a licensed physician has prescribed for the employee's child or other individual for whom the employee is a legal guardian.

Sanctions: An employee who violates these drug-free workplace provisions shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Sanctions may include:

1. Referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation program;
2. Referral to employee assistance programs;
3. Termination from employment with the District; and
4. Referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution.

Notice: Employees shall receive a copy of this policy. DH(LOCAL)

Dress and Grooming

Employees must adhere to the dress code as determined by their assigned department and or campus supervisor. The expectations are that all District employees will promote a positive image to patrons. Consistent with these roles, all employees, volunteers, and substitutes shall dress professionally and appropriately. Administrators and administrative support employees are expected to project a professional image and should dress appropriately for an office/business environment.

Teachers, volunteers, and support personnel (paraprofessionals) are expected to project a professional image that sets positive dress and grooming examples for students and shall adhere to standards of dress and appearance that are compatible with an effective learning environment.

School-based personnel shall follow these guidelines on All days students are in attendance. Principals may designate Fridays as days for all team members to wear jeans and spirit shirts as well as special dress days for teacher incentives. Principals may also determine the appropriate dress code to be worn on workdays when students are not in attendance. All other personnel shall follow the policy on all workdays unless directed differently by their supervisor.

Central office employees housed in the administration building and the annex offices are required to dress professionally to maintain a positive public image.

Transportation, School Nutrition, Maintenance, and Custodial employees must also comply with the Dress and Grooming Policy as stated in their Department Handbook.

Physical Education teachers, coaches, and athletic volunteers

These employees should wear the appropriate athletic attire necessary to meet the requirements of their job responsibilities and a sweat or warm-up suit when not actively teaching physical education classes or coaching. All employees are expected to dress in a professional manner. Clothing must be neat, clean, in good repair, and appropriate for on-the-job appearances at all times.

Physical Education teachers must follow the staff dress code for parent conference days, PTA/PTO meetings, and other occasions when not instructing class.

Tobacco and Nicotine Products and E-Cigarette Use

Policies DH, FNCD, GKA

State law prohibits smoking, using tobacco and nicotine products, or e-cigarettes on all district-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off school property. 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, using tobacco products, or e-cigarettes 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. E-cigarettes are identified in the Texas Health and Safety Code Section 161.081.

Employees are prohibited from possessing or using any type of nicotine product, including nicotine pouches, regardless of whether the product contains tobacco, while on school property, or while attending an off-campus school-related activity. Exceptions may be made for smoking cessation products with supervisor approval.

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, except as otherwise permitted by law or district policy
- Inappropriately destroying, removing, or using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by federal, state, or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by law or district policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district
- Failure to comply with requirements imposed by law, the awarding agency, or a pass-through entity for state and federal awards

Conflict of Interest

Policy CB, DBD

Employees are required to disclose in writing to the district 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 interest
- Any other obligation or relationship
- Non-school employment

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

An employee shall disclose in writing to his or her immediate supervisor any outside employment that in any way creates a potential conflict of interest with the proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or with the best interest of the District.

An employee shall disclose in writing to his or her immediate supervisor any private tutoring of District students for pay.

No employee shall use his/her position with the District to attempt to sell products or services.

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.

Endorsements

Policy DBD

Employees shall not recommend, endorse, or require students to purchase any product, material, or service in which the employee has a financial interest or that is sold by a company that employs or retains the District employee during non-school hours.

Employees shall not require students to purchase a specific brand of school supplies if other brands are equal and suitable for the intended instructional purpose.

Copyrighted Materials

Policy CY

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 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.

The district encourages personal participation in the political process, including voting. Employees who need to be absent from work to vote during the early voting period or on election day must communicate with their immediate supervisor prior to the absence.

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 fundraiser. 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 fundraiser or attending a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions.

Safety and Security

Policy CK series

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety and security of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety and security program includes written guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. See Emergencies on page 104 for additional information.

Employees must follow established protocols and response to emergencies for each campus and department. Refer to written security procedures specific to your location and work area.

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.

While driving on district business, employees are required to abide by all state and local traffic laws. Employees driving on district business are prohibited from texting and using other electronic devices that require both visual and manual attention while the vehicle is in motion. Employees will exercise care and sound judgment on whether to use hands-free technology while the vehicle is in motion.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact their immediate supervisor.

Possession of Firearms and Weapons

Policies DH, FNCG, GKA

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a 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. A person, including an employee, who holds a license to carry a handgun may transport or store a handgun or other firearm or ammunition in a locked vehicle in a parking lot, garage, or other district provided parking area, provided the handgun or firearm or ammunition is properly stored, and not in plain view. 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 ECISD Police 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 CSC

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 ECISD District Operations 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 every facility at the entrance of the building. 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.

General Procedures

Emergency School Closing

The district may close schools because of severe weather, epidemics, or other 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 website and notify the following radio and television stations:

Big 2 – KMID

CBS 7 – KOSA

NewsWest 9 – KWES/Telemundo

ICA Radio – KCRS AM

Fox – KPEJ West Texas Radio Group – Kiks99

Cumulus Radio – KODM

Univision – KUPB

Information about changes to the school day schedule or closures will be posted to ECISD, Facebook, and Twitter.

Emergencies

Policies CKC, CKD

All employees should be familiar with the safety procedures for responding to emergencies, including a medical emergency. Employees should locate evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas and be familiar with shelter in place, lockout, and lockdown procedures. 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 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 the Purchasing Department for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. It is the responsibility of the employee to update information in Employee Self Service 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 is located under Employee Self Service under Personal Information.

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 the HR Department. 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. The District Operations Office is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the District Operations Office to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

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 electronic notice (for teachers) or written notice (for all other employees) is received at least 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. An electronic/written notice of resignation should be submitted to the employee's supervisor and the appropriate HR Director.

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 *Reports to Texas Education Agency* on page 107. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and there is evidence 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 the appropriate HR Director 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 or designee 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 or designee 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 Online.

Dismissal of Noncontract Employees

Policies 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, sex, 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 44.)

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 knew about an employee's resignation or termination following an alleged incident of misconduct described above.

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 date 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.

Exit Surveys and Procedures

Exit surveys will be sent electronically to 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 must ensure their contact information is up to date in employee self-serv. All district keys, books, property, including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment.

Reports to Texas Education Agency

Policies DF, DHB, DHC

Certified Employees. 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 contact 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 or school 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 or designee 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, Ector County 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 [Dr. Jessica Southern, Director of Human Resources, 802 N Sam Houston, Odessa, Texas 79761, \[jessica.southern@ectorcountyisd.org\]\(mailto:jessica.southern@ectorcountyisd.org\), and 432-456-9351](#), the district Title IX coordinator for students.

Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to [Dr. Jessica Southern, Director of Human Resources, 802 N Sam Houston, Odessa, Texas 79761, \[jessica.southern@ectorcountyisd.org\]\(mailto:jessica.southern@ectorcountyisd.org\), and 432-456-9351](#), 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 or administrator, as applicable, 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, FFAF

Only designated employees may administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. Exceptions apply to the administration of medication, for respiratory distress, medication for anaphylaxis (e.g., EpiPen®), opioid antagonists, and medication for diabetes management, if the medication is 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 have the parent provide documentation for excused absences within 5 days of the absent date. These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the student handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

Bullying

Policy FFI

Bullying is defined by §TEC 37.0832. All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying, including cyberbullying, to teachers, school counselors, principals, or other employees. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and is reprinted below:

[**FFI \(LOCAL\) Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying**](#)

FFI (LOCAL) STUDENT WELFARE: FREEDOM FROM BULLYING

Note: This policy addresses bullying of District students. For purposes of this policy, the term bullying includes cyberbullying.

For provisions regarding discrimination and harassment involving District students, see FFH. Note that FFI shall be used in conjunction with FFH for certain prohibited conduct. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

Bullying Prohibited: The District prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by state law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

Examples: Bullying of a student could occur by physical contact or through electronic means and may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.

Minimum Standards: In accordance with law, the Superintendent shall develop administrative procedures to ensure that minimum standards for bullying prevention are implemented.

Retaliation: The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.

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

False Claim: A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Timely Reporting: Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

Reporting Procedures:

Student Report: To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other District employee. The Superintendent shall develop procedures allowing a student to anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying.

Employee Report: Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.

Report Format: A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.

Periodic Monitoring: The Superintendent shall periodically monitor the reported counts of bullying incidents, and that declines in the count may represent not only improvements in the campus culture because bullying declines but also declines in the campus culture because of a decline in openness to report incidents.

Notice of Report: When an allegation of bullying is reported, the principal or designee shall notify a parent of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the incident is reported. The principal or designee shall also notify a parent of the student alleged to have engaged in the conduct within a reasonable amount of time after the incident is reported.

Prohibited Conduct: The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.

Investigation of Report: The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

Concluding the Investigation: Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.

Notice to Parents: If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.

District Action:

Bullying: If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated

to address the conduct. The District may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances.

Discipline: A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action. The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.

Corrective Action: Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine whether any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District’s policy against bullying.

Transfers: The principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.

Counseling: The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

Improper Conduct: If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.

Confidentiality: To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

Appeal: A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.

Records Retention: Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).

Access to Policy and Procedures: This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District’s website, to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District’s administrative offices.

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 administrator.

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