WESLACO

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER HANDBOOK

2025-2026

Dr. Richard Rivera, Superintendent of Schools

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

319 West Fourth Street-Weslaco, TX 78596 Telephone (956) 969-6619 Fax: (956)969-6932

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of a disability, please email aybarra@wisd.us

Weslaco Independent School District

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Weslaco Independent School District (WISD) will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of sex, age, religion, race, color, marital status, veteran or military status, the presence of a medical condition, disability or any other legally protected status or any other basis prohibited by law.

Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's qualifications, experiences, and abilities. Employees with questions or concerns relating to discrimination on a basis listed above may notify:

Janie D. Rodriguez, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
319 West Fourth Street
Weslaco, Texas 78596
Phone number: (956) 969-6619
Website: www.wisd.us

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Weslaco Independent School District

Substitute Teacher Handbook

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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 policies that are included have been summarized. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to the WISD Human Resources Department.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. It is not intended to alter the at-will status of employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide and a brief explanation of district procedures. District policies and procedures can change at any time. 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 official. Policies can be viewed via the District webpage under the Superintendent's tab at www.wisd.us.

Substitute teachers are an important and vital part of our instructional staff. Your service plays a very important role in upholding the high standards of teaching, which we maintain in our school system. Your acceptance of these assignments ensures a continuous program of quality instruction for all our children. The job will be one of challenge in which your alertness and resourcefulness will be put to maximum use. The work is never easy. Substitute teachers are expected to meet this challenge with personal dedication, sincere and conscientious effort.

This Handbook has been developed to help clarify policies and procedures which apply to substitutes and to make your work more effective and more enjoyable. We hope that you will become familiar with it and that you will find it a useful source of information.

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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 biennially, on the first Tuesday of November and serve staggered four-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

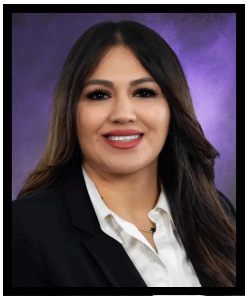
Isidoro Nieto
President

Armando Cuellar, Jr.
Vice President

Dr. Jaime Rodriguez
Secretary

Eduardo Serna
Trustee

Marcos De Los Santos
Trustee



Jaclyn Sustaita
Trustee

Ben Castillo
Trustee

The board usually meets the third Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m. in the Weslaco ISD Administration Building Boardroom located at 319 W. 4th Street. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and 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 a 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.

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Administration

Dr. Richard Rivera
Superintendent of Schools

Abel Aguilar
Deputy Superintendent

Daniel Budimir
Assistant Superintendent for School Leadership – Secondary

Beatriz Solano
Assistant Superintendent for School Leadership – Elementary

Janie D. Rodriguez
Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Americo Garza
Executive Director for Maintenance and Operations

David Robledo
Chief Financial Officer for Business and Finance

Carlos Robledo
Executive Director for District Communications

Carlos Martinez
Executive Director for Technology

Desi A. Rodriguez
Director for Athletics

2025-2026

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SCHOOL DIRECTORY

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (Grades Pre K-5)	
A. N. (Tony) Rico Elementary School 2202 N. International Blvd. Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6815 Jennifer Luna, Principal	**Airport Drive Elementary School** 410 N. Airport Drive Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6770 Gilbert Rebolloso, Principal
Cleckler-Heald Elementary School 1601 W. Sugarcane Drive Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6888 Monica Vanderveer, Principal	**Dr. R. E. Margo Elementary School** 1701 S. Bridge Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6800 Arcadia Lopez, Principal
Justice Raul A. Gonzalez Elementary School 3801 N. 5 1/2 West Weslaco, TX 78596 (956) 969-6760 Rosa Garcia, Principal	**North Bridge Elementary School** 2001 N. Bridge Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6810 Carmen Briones, Principal
Memorial Elementary School 1700 S. Border Ave. Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6780 Celinda Guajardo, Principal	**PFC Mario Ybarra Elementary School** 1800 E. Mile 10 Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6587 Sonia R. Closner, Principal
Rodolfo "Rudy" Silva Jr. Elementary School 1001 W. Mile 10 Rd. Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6790 Claudia Martinez, Principal	**Sam Houston Elementary School** 608 N. Cantu Street Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6740 Selma Gutierrez, Principal

MIDDLE SCHOOLS (Grades 6-8)	
Beatriz Garza Middle School 1111 W. Sugarcane Dr. Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6775 Melissa Mora-Rodriguez, Principal	**Central Middle School** 503 E. 6th Street Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6710 Dorothy Serna, Principal
Dr. Armando Cuellar Middle School 1201 S. Bridge Avenue Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-67120 Graciela Palacios, Principal	**Mary Hoge Middle School** 2302 N. International Blvd. Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6730 Lisa McCandless, Principal

HIGH SCHOOLS (Grades 9-12)		
Weslaco High School 1005 W. Pike Blvd. Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6700 Enrique Ornelas, Principal	**Weslaco East High School** 810 S. Pleasantview Dr. Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6950 Dr. David A. Gamboa, Principal	**South Palm Gardens High School** 3907 Camino Real Viejo Mercedes, Texas 78570 (956) 565-0404 Tina Wells, Principal

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL	CAREER & COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT CE
CAEP/DAEP 319 West 4th St. Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6916 Roger Perez, Principal	**CCDC** 814 E. Plaza St Weslaco, Texas 78596 (956) 969-6742 Janette Standard, Director

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Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

Policy AE

District Goals 2025 2026

STUDENT SUCCESS/LITERACY FOCUS

Provide high-quality, engaging and innovative programs along the continuum of learning environments that develop college, career, military and service-ready leaders.

ENGAGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Ensure safe, secure, drug-free, technology-rich, and inviting environments which promote high performance along the continuum of learning environments.

PARENT-COMMUNITY-BUSINESS-INDUSTRY-PARTNERSHIPS

Foster exceptions community service, open communication, and positive collaboration using innovative and multiple platforms that support teacher and student success.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Implement high-quality research-based professional development and continuous support for all employees so that they are able to facilitate teaching and learning along the continuum of learning environment.

FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Facilitate strategic planning, management, accountability, and transparent financial stewardship to optimize federal, state and local funding that supports the teaching and learning along the continuum of learning environment.

Vision Statement

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

Mission Statement

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

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Employment

1.1 Application Process

Qualifications:

A. High School Diploma or GED, College hours, College Degree, and/or a Teaching certificate.
B. Ability to communicate effectively in English, both orally and written.

Documentation Required for Hire:

1. Completed Substitute Application
2. Tuberculosis examination (within 120 days prior to the first day of work)
3. Copy of Social Security Card
4. Valid Driver's License or Identification Card
5. Copy of college transcripts (if applicable)
6. Copy of high school diploma or GED certificate
7. Two letters of reference
8. *Withholding tax form (W-4)
9. *Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9)
10. *Texas Open Records Act
11. *Alternative Retirement Plan

If applicable:

12. U.S. or foreign passport
13. Alien registration card
14. Military Discharge

**Items 8 – 11 will be completed upon hire with a Human Resources representative.*

1.2 Employment Policies

A substitute teacher is subject to all Board policies and administrative regulations. Board policies can be accessed online at www.wisd.us under the Superintendent/Board tab.

1.3 Evaluation of Substitute Teacher Performance

A Principal/designee may periodically evaluate the performance of the substitute teacher via classroom visits throughout the day. If necessary, the Principal/designee will document any incidents utilizing the Substitute Teacher Incident Report. All reports regarding the performance of a substitute teacher will be filed in your personnel file at the Human Resources Office.

1.4 Job Cancellations and Inability to Report to Work

In accepting a substitute teaching assignment, the substitute is making a commitment to report to the job in place of the regular teacher and/or a proctor assignment. The sudden inability to report to the job assignment causes a disruption in the educational process. In the event of an emergency that interferes with the substitute's ability to report to work, it is the responsibility of the substitute to notify the campus immediately so that arrangements are appropriately made to cover the assignment. Substitutes must also contact the Human Resources Department to cancel the assignment **PRIOR** to the reporting time of the scheduled assignment. When cancelling a job, the substitute is ***NOT*** allowed to offer the job to or recruit another substitute; arrangements will be made between the campus and the Human Resources Department. Repeated cancellations or non-acceptance of assignments may result in the termination of employment with Weslaco ISD.

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1.5 Job Notification/Substitute Agreement

Substitute assignments are managed through the Automated Substitute Management system. Assignments may be arranged in advance; however, due to emergency situations, there may be instances where a very short notice may be given. Punctuality and knowledge of the designated work schedule for the respective work day is expected of all substitutes.

In accepting a position as a substitute teacher with Weslaco ISD, they agree to make themselves available to serve the district when called upon or needed. However, due to the nature of substituting, it is impossible for the district to guarantee assignments and/or the frequency of assignments.

When receiving a call from the District Substitute Reporting System, it is crucial that the substitute teacher answers the telephone and does not have the phone number blocked. When a call is received for an assignment, have a note pad handy to document specific assignment instructions such as job #, name of the campus, teacher, etc. Substitute teachers are highly encouraged to accept assignments when called.

In the event that a substitute is called once an assignment time has already began, substitutes are expected to report as soon as possible. Should this be the case, an average of 30 to 45 minute window is allotted for the substitute to arrive at the location. Substitute teachers are expected to accept assignment calls.

1.6 Personal Information

The substitute teacher should notify Human Resources of any demographic changes to their personal information. In the event a substitute no longer wishes to accept assignments, the substitute must contact the Human Resources department to sign the resignation section of the Letter of Reasonable assurance. Changes on the Substitute Management system related to telephone numbers, temporary unavailable dates, or lost Personal Identification Numbers (PIN) may be resolved by contacting the Human Resources Department (956)969-6617.

In the event of a name change, a copy of the new social security card reflecting the name change must be submitted to the Human Resources Dept.

A letter of Reasonable Assurance will be sent via email to each substitute in May for the following school year. The letter of reasonable assurance must be signed electronically prior to August 1st, unless otherwise noted, of the subsequent school year for continued employment. Failure to submit a signed form by the deadline will result in termination.

Letters of employment verifications can be acquired by visiting the Human Resources Department office and filling out an employee request form.

1.7 Removal from Campus and/or Service

Substitute teachers may be removed from service to the district at any time it is deemed necessary and appropriate. Removal from the system or deactivation may be a result from not accepting jobs, declining too many jobs, not keeping up with the daily availability/unavailability of jobs, not keeping personal information current, poor performance on the job, etc. In order to maintain active employee status, substitutes are **REQUIRED** to work a minimum of 5 days but not more than 17 days per month.
Should an investigation occur due to violation of policy, the substitute may be immediately restricted from accepting assignments with the district. Substitutes may be restricted from accepting assignments at a

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particular campus when a block of service is received at the Human Resources Department from a particular campus.

Three "BLOCKS OF SERVICE" requests from different campuses will result in separation of employment with Weslaco ISD. One **"BLOCK OF SERVICE"** request may also result in separation of employment due to severe and/or gross negligence in performing job duties, violation of policy/procedures, and any other reason as determined to be acceptable by the Department of Human Resources.

An occurrence of inappropriate behaviors, including but not limited to those listed below, may result in immediate separation from employment with Weslaco ISD:

1. Use of vulgar language
2. Endangering students
3. Leaving a student(s)/class unattended
4. Falling asleep in the classroom
5. Making sexually or racially inappropriate oral/written comments
6. Displaying improper graphic or physical conduct or subjecting students to racial or sexual harassment
7. Inappropriate physical contact with student(s)
8. Use of alcohol or unlawful drugs on school premises
9. Insubordination
10. Intentional violation of school rules/regulations
11. Refusal to follow instructions and/or the lesson plans left by the classroom teacher
12. Any other inappropriate behavior

1.8 Termination of Substitute Employment

Policies DFE, DCD

Substitute teachers are non-contractual employees and may resign at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Human Resources Department. Non-contractual 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, religion, sex, national origin, disability, military status, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Non-contractual employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. To present a grievance, the employee must follow the District process outlined in Board policy DGBA(LOCAL).

After any separation of employment for whatever the reason, individuals must re-apply for the position if interested in returning to service.

Important

Any substitute employee who has not generated payroll for three months will be discontinued from employment without notification from Weslaco Independent School District.

1.9 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.

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Compensation and Benefits

2.1 Pay Schedule/Paychecks

Substitute teachers are paid on a monthly basis on the 10th of each month; however, should it fall on the weekend, pay day will be the Friday prior. The pay period is from the 1st of the month to the last day of month and paid the following month.

The district requires that all employees, including substitutes, participate in our direct deposit program. Employees will have their monthly paychecks directly deposited into their banking institution of choice. Furthermore, any changes in accounts, such as closing of an account, opening a new account, and/or changing banking institutions should be submitted to the payroll department on or before the last day of a given month to take effect with the next pay cycle. With automatic deposits service, an employee's money is immediately available on the pay date. Authorization for Direct Deposit is required by the employee.

It is the responsibility of the substitute to keep a personal record of each job number and corresponding date worked at each campus. If there is a discrepancy in the amount paid compared to the number of days worked, the substitute should immediately contact the Human Resources Department at (956)969-6619 to verify that the number of days worked have been correctly reported. It is the substitutes responsibility to review his/her pay stub for any discrepancies in the amount of pay or number of days worked.

In an instance that a paper check must be issued, the respective paycheck-will not be released to any individual other than the employee whose name appears on the check, unless the employee provides written authorization.

2.2 Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

Policy DEA

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and a pay structure established for each position. The District's pay plans are reviewed by administration each year and adjusted on an as needed basis. All District positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FSLA). Substitute teachers are classified as exempt employees and are not eligible for overtime pay.

Salaries and wages are reviewed on an annual basis and adjusted according to the budgeted amounts approved by the Board of Trustees. The Substitute Teacher pay schedule is as follows:

Category I: Regular Assignment Daily Rate:

Non-Degreed (59 or less College Hours)	Non-Degreed (60+ College Hours	Degreed	Certified
$105.00	$120.00	$150.00	$180.00

Category II: Long-Term Daily Rate:

Long Term Assignment are 17 consecutive work days or more in the same assignment.

Non-Degreed (59 or less College Hours)	Non-Degreed (60+ College Hours	Degreed	Certified
$135.00	$150.00	$180.00	$210.00

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Substitutes can be classified as both a Category I and Category II in the same month depending on the jobs reported. A substitute teacher typically works 8 hours (full day) or 4 hours (half day). Employees should contact the Human Resources Office for more information about the District's pay schedules or for questions regarding pay.

2.3 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 under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act.

Employees are NOT eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions regarding unemployment benefits should contact the Human Resources Office.

2.4 Employee Worktime Records

All substitute teachers are required to sign in/out using TimeClock Plus biometric system at the Main Office upon arriving and leaving a job site.

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Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 District Role

The Weslaco Independent School District Board of Trustees, Superintendent of Schools, Administration, and professional staff consider substitute teaching an important component of the educational success of all our students. The substitute teacher plays a key role in upholding the high standards of teaching maintained in the school system; therefore, the presence of the substitute teacher ensures a continuous program of quality instruction for all children. Substitutes face new challenges daily that may lead to the work being difficult; however, we expect that they surpass these challenges with dedication and a sincere conscientious effort.

Substitute teachers are welcome as members of the professional family and are to be treated with consideration, courtesy, and respect by all campus personnel, parents, and students.

It is the responsibility of all school personnel to establish and maintain a helpful and respectful attitude concerning the substitute and his/her work.

3.2 Campus Role - The School Principal

The campus Principal or designee will be responsible for providing substitute teachers with the schedule to be followed during the school day and of any special activities that may be planned.

The principal will designate an employee to assist the substitute teacher in locating the classroom, locating keys, textbooks, and instruction left by the teacher regarding information/lessons to be administered. Additionally, the principal will provide information regarding the lunchroom, staff restroom facilities, emergency procedures, exits, etc.

The principal will promote an attitude of cooperation for substitute teachers among the student body and the staff.

The principal or designee will regularly visit the substitute teacher's classroom to assist and answer questions as needed. If issues arise, the principal will submit proper documentation to the Human Resources Office which could result in a request to block the substitute from the campus.

3.3 Classroom Teacher's Role

The classroom teacher will provide the substitute teacher with lesson plans, class roster(s), seating charts (if applicable), and materials/supplies needed for the lesson along with instructions.

The classroom teacher will promote an attitude of cooperation for substitute teachers among the students and staff.

3.4 The Substitute Teacher's Role

Policy DPB

The substitute teacher should assume the role and responsibilities of the regular classroom teacher, including any special assignments or duties (i.e., supervision in the cafeteria or hallways, bus duty, playground duty, etc.) the regular teacher may have been assigned for the day, and ensure that the following tasks are accomplished during the day:

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1. The substitute teacher should arrive with plenty of time to acquaint themselves with the school's procedures, the teacher's lesson plans, the room layout, and obtain emergency procedure information, etc. Therefore, it is suggested to arrive at the assigned school at least 15-20 minutes early.
2. Report directly to the principal or designee for instructions regarding classroom assignment, class rosters, extra duty assignments and bell schedule, etc.
3. Request a custodian, security guard or assistant principal to unlock the room.
4. Check the teacher's mailbox (the one you are reporting for).
5. Review the teacher's lesson plans, teaching materials, general building routines, fire drill procedures and the bell schedule.
6. Introduce yourself to the neighboring classroom teachers.
7. Consult with the principal or neighboring classroom teachers if there are any questions about the day's activities.
8. Stand by the door and greet the students. Supervision of halls and corridors are major responsibilities of all teachers. Introduce yourself to the students upon their arrival. The initial impression of the substitute teacher is a significant factor in successful classroom management. Self-confidence, patience, resourcefulness, flexibility and enthusiasm are important prerequisites for achieving good control.
9. The substitute teacher is to take attendance following the campus' regular attendance procedures and keep absentee slips together with attendance rosters. Attempt to learn the students' names as much as possible and try to call students by their names.

   a. To help remember names, use a seating chart or name tags, or jot down notes about specific students. A student is more likely to behave if the substitute teacher knows him/her by name. Make sure to verify that the number of students in the class corresponds with the attendance list.
10. Never excuse a student from class or release a student to a non-school district employee without direct authorization from the office.
11. Maintain high standards of ethics and avoid teacher-pupil confrontations.
12. Correct students' papers and tests if instructed to do so by the regular teacher. Leave the room at the end of the day in an orderly matter and ensure that the classroom is locked.
13. Report serious accidents or illnesses to the principal, designee, or school nurse immediately.
14. Report any suspicious activity or anything out of the ordinary to campus administration.
15. Do not leave campus at any point throughout the workday without advising administration, with the exception of lunch period. However, punctuality is expected upon returning from lunch.
16. Attend all professional meetings and school activities which occur during the time you are substituting on a campus and relay any information to the regular classroom teacher.
17. Leave a detailed summary of student performance throughout the day and advise the teacher of any issues that may have occurred.
18. Keep copies of all notices and bulletins received and place them in the lesson plan book for the regular teacher.
19. Return any keys, records, confidential information to the main office at the end of the workday.

The substitute teacher should use this handbook as well as any other manuals provided to ensure that policies and procedures and adhered to. The substitute teacher should maintain high standards of ethics, act professionally, present themselves as a professional and maintain confidentiality at all times. The substitute teacher is expected to provide instruction, maintain classroom discipline, and provide honest feedback to the regular teacher so that he/she may follow up on any problems.

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If a substitute teacher is assigned for an extended period of time, attendance at all scheduled meetings is required. The substitute teacher is to report to the front office during the regular classroom teacher's conference periods unless informed otherwise. If the substitute teacher is not sure if attendance at a meeting or function is appropriate, the principal or designee is to be consulted.

Substitute teachers have a professional obligation to use extreme caution in expressing personal reactions and opinions about what they see and hear in the classrooms for which they are substituting. Any information about students is confidential and protected by law.

Comments comparing schools or comparing students from different neighborhoods is considered unethical and unprofessional and should not be done. Any concerns you may have should be reported to the campus principal or the Human Resources Office.

3.5 Prohibited Conduct by a Substitute Teacher

The substitute teacher shall **NOT** under any circumstances:

1. Eat and/or drink in the classroom in which students are present unless it is campus protocol to do so;
2. Conduct personal work such as, but not limited to, bill paying, crafts, reading, texting, etc. while substitute teaching;
3. Leave the classroom unattended at any time;
4. Change the seating arrangements or room organization except for temporary grouping as called for by the instructional lesson plans;
5. Use any electronic device(s) for personal reasons while in the classroom teaching;
6. Allow students to be on their personal electronic devices for reasons other than as it pertains to instruction;
7. Allow students to leave the classroom for vending machine purchases;
8. Allow students to leave school before the end of the day, unless otherwise directed by administration;
9. Keep a student(s) after dismissal time;
10. Share information about students or staff members with others;
11. Touch students in any way unless it is to secure their safety and security;
12. Leave money or valuables in the classroom;
13. Criticize the teacher or their materials or methods;
14. Review school records without permission from the principal.

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Classroom Management

4.1 Effective Discipline and Classroom Management

It is the complete responsibility of the substitute teacher to maintain control of the classroom at all times. When a substitute teacher is present, it is normal for students to attempt to take advantage of the situation. The District expects substitutes to maintain control of the classroom and fulfill a productive academic day.

Effective Classroom Teacher Practices:

1. Be fair and consistent;
2. Use a positive approach with students;
3. Compliment the students in public but correct poor behavior privately;
4. Do not use sarcasm or other embarrassing methods;
5. Do not let students get out of control;
6. Ask for help from your neighboring teachers;
7. Contact the campus administration when needed;
8. Walk around and monitor the classroom at all times;
9. Focus on all of the students in the classroom.

4.2 Managing Classroom Discipline:

Classroom management encompasses all of the things that teachers do to obtain and maintain order, control, and student cooperation in classroom learning. Studies indicate that successful management includes both responding effectively when problems arise and in preventing problems altogether. Effective classroom teachers are skilled at giving clear, precise directions and information. These teachers express desired attitudes and behaviors; prepare levels of student success; provide clear expectations for work standards; offer consistent responses to appropriate and inappropriate student behavior; and generally, use classroom procedures and rules to handle discipline problems.

4.3 Successful Substitute Experience

The following are some suggestions that will help ensure a successful substitute experience for both the substitute teacher and the students as well as minimize any opportunities for disruptions:

1. Classroom control is essential. Discipline is based on understanding and open communication. The substitute teacher should establish order upon entering the classroom.
2. The substitute teacher is allowed to fill out a student discipline referral form when a problem arises in the classroom that becomes disruptive to others. The following are 5 methods a substitute can use when referring a disruptive student to the office:
    a. Send the student with the referral form to the office;
    b. Send the referral to the office with another student;
    c. During an off period, such as a conference period, deliver the referral to the office;
    d. Deliver the referral to the office at the end of the day;
    e. Leave the referral for the teacher to review and handle;
    f. In cases of major disruptions or an overly aggressive student, call the office for immediate assistance.
3. The substitute teacher is to strive to maintain the established classroom routine. The material the teacher asked to be covered should be presented and the students should remain busy completing their tasks.

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4. The substitute teacher should be prepared with an alternative activity – a general assignment, an academically related game, or reading assignment or a word puzzle – to use with those students who complete their assignments early.

4.4 Student Discipline

Policies FN series and FO series

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Handbook. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of factors and disciplinary management strategies. A substitute teacher is NOT allowed to administer corporal punishment at any time. In addition, a substitute teacher should never physically handle a student in any way. If a situation gets out of control, the substitute teacher should call the office for the assistance. Never, ever leave the students unattended.

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Standard Operating Procedures

5.1 Arrival

The substitute teacher should arrive with plenty of time to acquaint themselves with the school's procedures, the teacher's lesson plans, the room layout, and obtain emergency procedure information, etc. Therefore, it is suggested to arrive at the assigned school at least 15-20 minutes early.

5.2 Conference/Planning Periods

A substitute may be asked to cover a class or perform other duties as needed by the campus administration during the day. Substitute teachers are required to assist in any capacity needed during the assignment, which may include working in another classroom during the conference or planning period. Substitute teachers are paid for 8 hours a day (excluding lunch) if working a full day and 4 hours a day if working a half day (lunch not included).

5.3 Extra Duties

Substitutes are not allowed to assume extracurricular duties or intervention duties after the school day. This may include Extended day, Saturday school, Summer School, and/or after school events (athletic or otherwise). If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact the Human Resources Department.

Substitutes may be required to perform duties that are deemed necessary by the principal for the safe and successful operation of the school such as bus duty, hall monitoring, or other special duties. Such monitoring duties are NOT considered EXTRA DUTY.

5.4 Fire and Emergency Drills

Emergency drill procedures should be posted in each classroom. The substitute should become familiar with the classroom evacuation route and exiting procedures.

5.5 Illness or Accident

As a substitute teacher you are required to report all accidents or illnesses to the nurse immediately.

Important

**Never under any circumstances, administer medication to a student unless otherwise instructed by campus administration for students with severe allergies (if needed)

5.6 Inclement Weather/Emergency Procedures

The substitute teacher should inquire upon arrival to the job site specific instructions related to inclement weather procedures, emergency drills, evacuations, building lock down procedures, etc.

5.7 Nurse's Schedule

The substitute teacher is to review the nurse's schedule and procedures for medical emergencies. It is the responsibility of the substitute to be familiar with where the Nurse's Office is located and whether or not the Nurse is present for the day. In the event the Nurse is not present, the substitute teacher is to find out who the contact person will be on campus for medical needs and emergencies.

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5.1 Release of a Student

Any outsider who comes into the classroom for information about a child or who comes to the classroom requesting that a child be released MUST be directed to the principal's office. In any event, children are NOT to be released from the classroom without official notice from the Main Office.

5.2 Student Attendance

The substitute teacher is to take attendance following the school's regular attendance procedures. Make sure to verify that the number of students in the class corresponds with the attendance list. Keep absentee slips together with the attendance rosters.

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General Information

6.1 Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace

Policy DH

Weslaco ISD is an alcohol and drug-free workplace. The use, manufacture, distribution, dispensing of alcohol and prescription or illegal drugs in any job-related context is strictly prohibited.

6.2 Cellular Devices

Policy DH

Cellular devices are allowed on school grounds as long as they are turned off/silenced during the workday. No personal calls should be made or received during the instructional day while in the classroom with students.

6.3 District Electronic Communications - Ethics

Policy DH

The District's electronic communication system, including its network access to the Internet, is to be used for administrative and instructional purposes only. Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communication system are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use.

Employees and students who are authorized to use the system must abide by the provisions outlined in the District's communication system administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension or termination of privileges and may lead to further disciplinary action which may include termination of employment.

Examples of inappropriate uses of the District's electronic communication system are:

- Using the District's electronic communications system for illegal purpose (e.g. gambling, pornography, computer hacking).
- Disabling, bypassing, or attempting to disable or bypass any system monitoring, filtering or other security measure.
- Sharing your username and password with others; using someone else's account access information.
- Misusing school resources through unauthorized system use (e.g. online gaming, internet radio, downloading music, watching videos, participating in chat rooms, checking personal email).

Questions regarding computer use and data management can be directed to the WISD Technology Department at 956-969-6546.

6.4 Dress Code

The substitute teacher must dress professionally for job assignments. Students must view substitutes as authority figures. A substitute's attire must follow the Weslaco ISD employee dress code. Professional appearance is directly linked to the level of respect students display. Substitute teachers are expected to comply with the dress code policy of the Weslaco Independent School District.

District employees shall dress and be groomed in a clean and neat manner appropriate for their assignment

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and in accordance with the following dress and grooming requirements. Final determination of acceptable dress and grooming rests with the principal and/or designee.

All Employees

- Tattoos considered to be offensive are unacceptable and must be covered.
- Visible Hickeys (*Hickies*), also sometimes called love bites or kiss marks may be considered offensive and must be covered.
- Facial piercings such as lip piercings, nose piercings, tongue piercings, and eyebrow piercings will not be permitted.
- Blue jeans are not permitted to be worn unless otherwise authorized by the campus principal and/or department supervisor.
- Warm-ups are not professional and are not considered acceptable attire unless warranted by assignment and with the campus principal's/department supervisor's authorization.

Males

- Male employees shall wear ties, unless their assignments are such that a tie is clearly unwarranted or unless the principal and/or department supervisor has authorized an exemption.
- Male employees shall not wear a hairstyle which extends below the collar. Hair is expected to be kept neat and clean at all times. Facial hair is acceptable as long as it is kept neatly trimmed.
- Male employees shall not wear flip flops (thongs) or other such casual footwear.

Females

- Female employees shall wear appropriate undergarments at all times.
- Female employees shall not wear flip flops (thongs) or other such casual footwear.
- Female employees may not wear shorts (Bermuda, Cargo, etc.)
- Female employees may wear Capri pants as long as they are not casual wear. They must be professionally worn and must exceed mid-calf length.
- Female employees may not wear blouses or tops that are transparent, exposing undergarments.
- Female employees may not wear strapless and/or spaghetti strapped tops. Sleeveless tops must be worn professionally and/or with a blazer.
- Female employees may not wear skirts shorter than 4 inches above the knee.

6.5 E-Mail Account

After you receive your first paycheck, please call 969-6546 for your District email, username, and password. Please adhere to all District electronic communications policies and procedures.

6.6 Identification Badges

Weslaco Independent School District's most important priority is to provide an educational atmosphere which is safe & secure and conducive to learning. *(Please report any suspicious activities to the school principal)*

For the safety of students, it is mandatory that substitute teachers wear their substitute teacher photo identification badge when reporting to work. A campus principal may dismiss a substitute who does not have their photo identification badge available. You also cannot accept any jobs if you do not have your substitute photo identification card. If you have lost or misplaced your photo identification badge, call the Human Resources Department for a new one (replacement badges will be offered for a fee).

6.7 Lunch

The substitute teacher will receive a lunch break. Substitute teachers may bring their own lunch/snack or

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may purchase lunch from the cafeteria. If time allows, the substitute teacher may go out for lunch but must return promptly at the scheduled time indicating the end of the lunch break.

6.8 Parking

The substitute teacher is to park in designated parking spaces. If the substitute teacher does not know where to park, seek direction from campus personnel.

6.9 Possession of Firearms and Weapons

Employees, visitors and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, illegal knives, or weapons onto school grounds or into school buildings. Employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to an administrator immediately.

6.10 School Property

It is expected that the substitute teacher will maintain good order wherever assigned and create such conditions that are conducive to a good learning environment. The regular classroom teacher is legally and morally charged with the school property as well as the welfare of the children. The same is expected of the substitute teacher.

6.11 Sexual Harassment

Policies DIA, FFG (LEGAL), FNCJ (LOCAL)

6.11a – Employee-to-Employee

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.

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.

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

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

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

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

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6.11 b - Employee-to-Student

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]

In most instances, sexual abuse of a student by an employee violates the student's constitutional right to bodily integrity. Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to, fondling, sexual assault or sexual intercourse.

Employees who suspect a student is being sexually harassed or abused by another employee are obligated to report it to the campus principal. All allegations for sexual harassment or sexual abuse of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. Conduct which may be characterized as known or suspected child abuse will be reported to the appropriate authorities as required by law. Employees with questions or concerns relating to the alleged sexual harassment of a student should call the Human Resources Department.

6.12 Use of Electronic Media with Students

Policy DH

Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]

See *Use of Electronic Media with Students*, below for regulations on employee communication with students through electronic media.

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.

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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:

1. 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.

2. 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:

3. 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).

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4. 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.

5. The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.

6. The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.

7. The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics including:

    a) 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]
    b) Copyright law [Policy CY]
    c) Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DH]

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

6.13 Public Information on Private Devices

Policy DH

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

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6.14 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.

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PAY SCHEDULE

PAY PERIOD	PAY DAY
August 18-29, 2025	Wednesday, September 10, 2025
September 2-30, 2025	Thursday, October 9, 2025
October 1-31, 2025	Monday, November 10, 2025
November 1-31, 2025	Wednesday, December 10, 2025
December 1-18, 2025	Friday, January 9, 2026
January 6-30, 2026	Tuesday, February 10, 2026
February 2-27, 2026	Tuesday, March 10, 2026
March 2-31, 2026	Friday, April 10, 2026
April 1-30, 2026	Friday, May 8, 2026
May 1-22, 2026	Wednesday, June 10, 2026

*** All payroll dates are subject to change without notice**

Important Phone Numbers

SmartFind Express (SFE) Absence Systems
(956) 246-4587

Substitute Help Desk / Payroll Inquiries:

Princess Escandon
Phone #: 956-969-6617
Email: pescandon@wisd.us

Veronica Jilpas
Phone #: 956-969-6616
Email: vjilpas@wisd.us

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Bell Schedule

2025-2025
SCHOOL YEAR

Elementary Schools
7:45 AM - 3:30 PM

Middle Schools
8:00 AM - 4:05 PM

High Schools
8:15 AM - 4:15 PM

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2025 2026 WESLACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

- First Day of School — August 18, 2025
- Last Day of School — May 22, 2026

BELL SCHEDULE

- Elementary — 7:45 am—3:30 pm **(465 mins)**
- Middle School — 8:00 am—4:05 pm **(485 mins)**
- High School — 8:15 am—4:15 pm **(480 mins)**

INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS-168

SEMESTER 1 — **79 days**

1st Six Weeks	Aug. 18—Sept. 25	***28 days***
2nd Six Weeks	Sept. 29—Nov. 6	***27 days***
3rd Six Weeks	Nov. 10—Dec. 18	***24 days***

SEMESTER 2 — **89 days**

4th Six Weeks	Jan. 6—Feb.20	***32 days***
5th Six Weeks	Feb. 23—Apr. 10	***27 days***
6th Six Weeks	Apr. 13—May 22	***30 days***

TOTAL INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES

- Elementary 78,120
- Middle School 81,480
- High School 80,640

STUDENT/STAFF HOLIDAYS

•Labor Day	September 1, 2025
•**Weather Day**	October 10, 2025
•Indigenous Day	October 13, 2025
•Thanksgiving Break	November 24-28, 2025
•Winter Break	December 22, 2025- January 2, 2026
•**Weather Days**	February 6 & 9, 2026
•Spring Break	March 16-20, 2026
•Easter Break	April 3 & 6, 2026
•Memorial Day	May 25, 2026

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **July 30, 2025 — New Teacher Orientation & Luncheon**
- August 4-7 2025
- **August 5, 2025 -Convocation**
- August 13-15, 2025
- September 26, 2025
- November 7, 2025
- January 5, 2026
- March 13, 2026
- May 26 & 27, 2026

STAFF WORK DAYS

- August 8, 11-12, 2025
- December 19, 2025
- May 28 & 29, 2026

GRADUATIONS

•CCDC	**May 19, 2026**
•SPGS	**May 20, 2026**
•WEHS	**May 21, 2026**
•WHS	**May 22, 2026**

STATE TESTING DAYS

- December 2-12, 2025
- February 16—March 27, 2026
- April 7—May 1, 2026
- June 16—26, 2026

JULY 2025

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

AUGUST 2025

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

SEPTEMBER 2025

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

OCTOBER 2025

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

NOVEMBER 2025

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

DECEMBER 2025

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

JANUARY 2026

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

FEBRUARY 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH 2026

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

APRIL 2026

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

MAY 2026

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

JUNE 2026

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

Dr. Richard Rivera, Superintendent of Schools

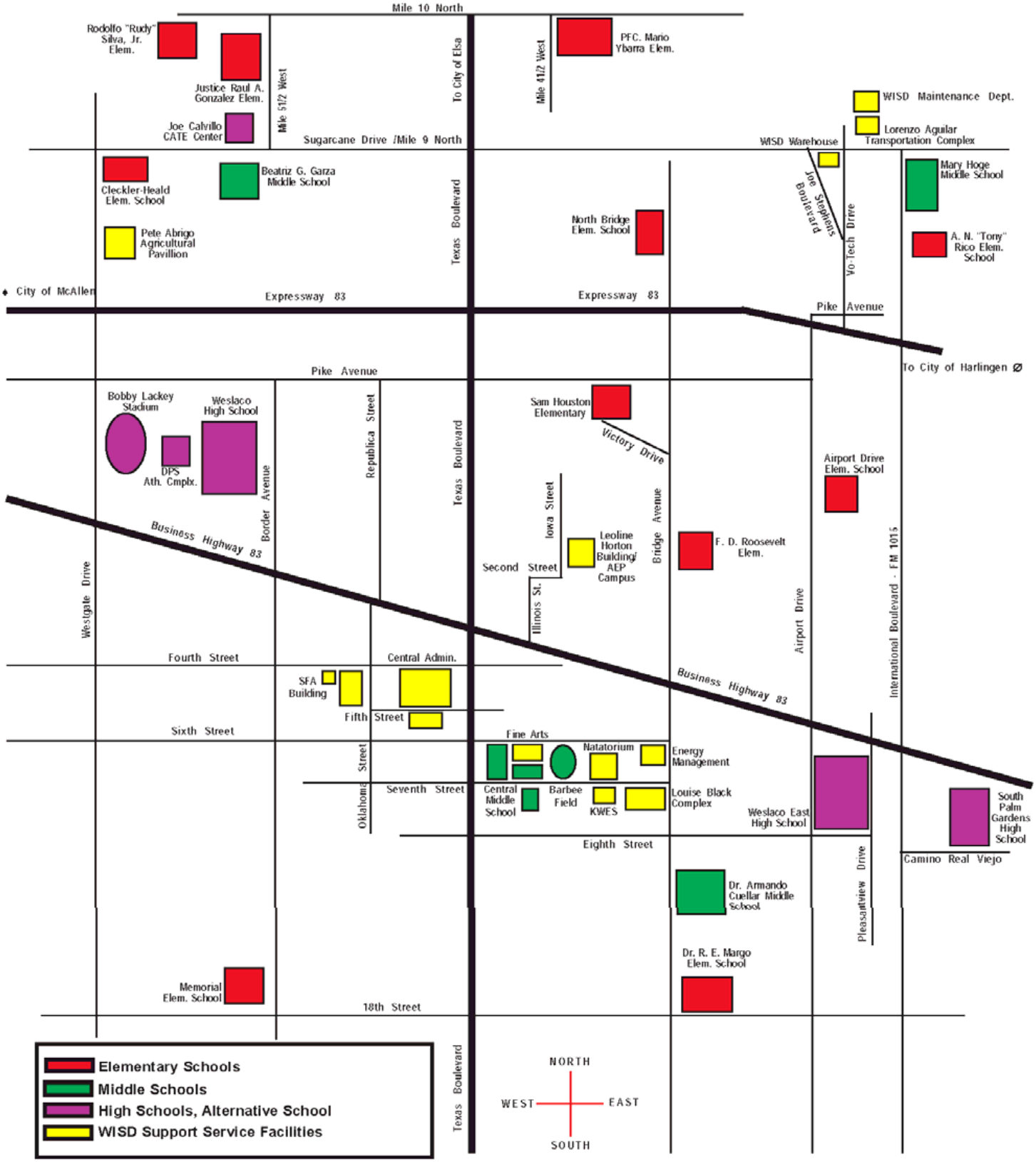
Board Approved 04/14/2025

• 319 West Fourth Street – Weslaco, TX 78596 • (956)969-6500 • www.wisd.us

District Map

WESLACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

319 W. Fourth St. / P. O. Box 266 Weslaco, Texas 78599-0266 956-969-6500



NOTE: THIS MAP IS NOT TO SCALE

08/12 WISD Public Information Office

Weslaco ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age or disability in providing education services, ac tivities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.