



# Sheldon ISD

## 2025-2026 Employee Handbook

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of a disability, please email [humanresources@sheldonisd.com](mailto:humanresources@sheldonisd.com).



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# Employee Handbook Receipt

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Name

ID

Campus/Department

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

Employees have the option of reading the handbook in electronic format online by accessing the handbook on the Human Resources department page of the Sheldon ISD website at:

Go to [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com)

Select "Departments"

Select "Human Resources"

Select "Employee Handbook"

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this book. As the district provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes. I understand that no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will employment relationships are intended by this handbook.

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

Please check all that apply: \*

***I have read and agree to abide by the standards, policies and procedures defined or referenced in the documents listed.***

Sheldon ISD Employee Handbook.

Sheldon ISD Acceptable Use Policies

Sheldon ISD Attendance and Electronic Time Keeping Policies

Signature

Date

The above signature page should be completed electronically online in the TalentEd Records module. If employees are unable to complete the electronic signature, they may sign, date, and forward this Employee Handbook Receipt to the secretary at your campus or department. Signed receipts must be on file in the Human Resources department.

*The above signature page should be completed electronically online in the TalentEd Records module. If employees are unable to complete the electronic signature, they may sign, date, and forward this Employee Handbook Receipt to the secretary at your campus or department. Signed receipts must be on file in the Human Resources department.*

# Welcome!

Dear Sheldon ISD Employee:

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 have been included have been summarized. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to the 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 non-contract 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 [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com).



# District Information

*"Where Vision Becomes Legacy"*

Sheldon ISD is a fast growth public school district in Northeast Harris County. The district currently serves approximately 11,000 students on twelve campuses.

Over the years, the community has been supportive of the goals and actions of this district as evidenced by the approval of major bond elections. Voters approved \$23.5 million in 1998 to renovate district campuses; \$97 million in 2000 to address expected growth; and \$98.7 million in 2006 to build schools, purchase necessary land, upgrade technology and renovate current facilities.

The goal of Sheldon ISD is to provide educational and extracurricular opportunities for students to become productive citizens and viable candidates in the global workforce. Sheldon students have excelled in various programs at the national level, including the Air Force JROTC and FFA programs, as well as at state and local levels. Athletic programs consistently excel at both district and state levels. The district's Fine Arts programs include a partnership with the Houston Ballet, the Suzuki Strings program, and a significant increase in the number of students enrolled in the district's band, choir, art and dance programs. Sheldon ISD recognizes that students must be properly prepared to be competitive in today's workforce and offers advanced placement, dual credit classes, and excellent academic programs.

# History

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- In 1952, Sheldon became an independent school district. The only school at the time was the Alamo school with only eight grades.
- In 1954, a Houston investor named Cortes Ewing (C.E.) King donated a 54-acre tract that became the site of the original C.E. King Junior-Senior High School, now King Middle School. In 1955, the school was partially destroyed by fire. But in the same year, the first graduating class walked across the stage with 11 graduates in a district of 609 students. In 1965, the Junior-Senior High School was renamed C.E. King Junior High School with 493 students in attendance. The 70's and 80's saw the addition of classrooms and a field house as well as cafeteria renovations. In 2002 more renovations to classrooms and the clinic were completed and in 2008 more classrooms and science labs were added.
- In 1957, the district closed the Alamo School and replaced it with Sheldon Elementary on 30 acres of land donated by the Harris County Board of Education. That school was added on to in 1999. In 2003, the campus was closed and joined with Royalwood while a new building was constructed. The new campus opened in 2004.
- In 1965, the new C.E. King High School opened its doors. In 1970, a building addition was completed and in 1973 an auditorium was added. In 1978 classroom additions were made to the main building and annex. Other additions such as a gym, field house, and wellness center were added in the late 1980's and early 1990's. In 1999 an administrative addition was completed, a two-story addition in 2002 and the plaza cafeteria in 2003.
- In 1968, Royalwood Elementary was constructed on 11 acres donated to the district by Mr. Goldson, the original developer of the Royalwood Subdivision. At that time, the combined enrollment of Royalwood Elementary and Sheldon Elementary was 1,121 students. A gym was added in 1985. Royalwood saw classroom additions in 1970, 1990 and 1999. In 2003, it gained a new cafeteria, office renovation and more classrooms.
- In 1971 the JH Crenshaw Memorial Stadium was constructed between C.E. King Jr. High and C.E. King High School.
- In 1972 Parkway Elementary opened next door to the High School on 10

acres donated to the district by the Parkway Subdivision. That campus later closed, became the KHS Annex and is still utilized.

- In 1974, Sheldon Jr. High opened adjacent to Sheldon Elementary. In 1986, 1990 and 1999 the building gained additional classrooms. It was later renamed Sheldon.
- Intermediate and housed the district's 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. In 2007, the campus became Sheldon 6<sup>th</sup> grade campus as the district moved its 5<sup>th</sup> graders back to elementary campuses. Sheldon Jr. High is no longer a campus. Sixth grade is now part of C.E. King Middle School.
- In 1977 the district had six campuses with over 3,600 students and 250 teachers. In 1982, the district built L.E. Monahan Elementary. A gym was added in 1985. In addition in 2002, Stephanie Cravens Early Childhood Academy opened as the district's home to pre-K and kindergarten students. In 2007, the campus received additional classrooms and a cafeteria expansion.
- Also in 2002, the district opened its first administration complex, the Dr. Donald Ney Administrative Complex named after the district's late business manager. This building is the first building to house all of the district's central office. Prior to this, central office staff could be found on campuses with additional space.
- In 2004, the district opened KASE Academy.
- In 2008, the district opened H.M. Carroll Elementary, located in the Hidden Meadows Subdivision.
- In 2009, the district opened M.R. Null Middle School.
- In 2009, the district opened Sheldon Early Childhood Academy.
- In 2011, the district opened three facilities: Garrett Elementary, the Sheldon ISD Network Operations Center and the Sheldon ISD Transportation & Maintenance Facility.
- In 2012, the district opened the Early College High School.
- The new C. E. King High School Competition Gym opened in December 2015.
- Sheldon Lake Elementary opened in August 2019.
- The new comprehensive C.E. King High School opened in 2020.

# Superintendents

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During the history of Sheldon ISD, the district has had 12 Superintendents:

- Charles Bigham (1952-1956)
- M.J. Fields (1956-1959)
- Arthur Hodges (1959-1961)
- JH Crenshaw (1961-1968)
- Lloyd Dickens (1968-1983)
- Max Nichter (1983-1992)
- Bobby Wood (1992-1995)
- Stephanie Cravens (1995-2004)
- Dr. G. Steve Mills (2004-2007)
- Dr. Vickey M. Giles (2007-2015)
- Dr. King Davis (2016-2023)
- Dr. Demetrius McCall (2023-Current)

# 2025-2026 School Calendar



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
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
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
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				

**9-Week Start/End Dates**  
 First 9 Weeks .....August 12 - October 10, 2025  
 Second 9 Weeks...October 20 - December 19, 2025  
 Third 9 Weeks .....January 7 - March 6, 2026  
 Fourth 9 Weeks .....March 16 - May 28, 2026

First Day of School for Students    August 12, 2025  
 Last Day of School for Students     May 28, 2026

**Bad Weather Days**  
 September 15, 2025  
 February 6, 2026

**Early Release**  
 December 19, 2025  
 May 28, 2026

**Staff Work Days / Student Holidays**  
 November 4 (Parent Teacher Conference)  
 February 6 (Parent Teacher Conference)  
 May 29

**Staff Development Days / Student Holidays**  
 New Teacher Inservice July 28 - 30  
 July 31 - August 11  
 September 15  
 November 3  
 January 5-6  
 February 9-10 (Staff Exchange Days)

**Holidays**  
 July 4 - Independence Day  
 September 1 - Labor Day  
 October 13-17 - Fall Break  
 November 24-28 - Thanksgiving Break  
 December 22 - January 2 - Christmas Break  
 January 19 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
 March 9 -13 - Spring Break  
 April 3 & 6 - Easter Weekend  
 May 25 - Memorial Day  
 June 18 - Juneteenth

**Key**

<span style="background-color: #f8d7da; border: 1px solid #c0392b; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px;"></span>	Early Release December 19, 2025 & May 28, 2026
<span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 10px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></span>	First & Last Day of School
<span style="border: 1px solid black; width: 10px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Beginning/Ending 9 Week Period

## **Life in Sheldon**

In proximity to major industrial complexes and other places of business, Sheldon is a great place to live and work. Located only a few minutes from downtown Houston, residents take full advantage of employment opportunities as well as cultural, recreational, and diversified sports entertainment offered in one of the most booming megalopolis areas in the world. The district is one of the fastest growing in the Greater Houston Area, thanks in part to the completion of Beltway 8 and New 90. In addition to employment and housing opportunities, the Sheldon area offers a variety of year-round recreations. Golf, swimming, fishing, camping, and hiking opportunities are plentiful on the San Jacinto River, Eisenhower Park, Deussen Park, Sheldon Reservoir, and Sheldon Lake Environmental Learning Center.

## **Parks**

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Houston's 324 municipal parks encompass 20,000 land acres and 12,500 water-covered acres, including Lake Houston. Harris County maintains 95 parks with 14,571 acres. Seventy miles of Gulf Coast beaches are within one hour's drive from downtown Houston.

## **Cultural Attractions**

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Residents of the Sheldon area have a virtually unlimited choice of cultural attractions in Houston including museums, music, theatre, and dance. The Houston Symphony Society, Theatre Under the Stars, and the Houston Grand Opera offer seasons of productions. The Nina Vance Alley Theatre features an 800-seat main theatre and a 300-seat arena theatre. The Houston Ballet offers a season of performances and conducts classes for children and adults. The Museum of Fine Arts, the Contemporary Arts Museum, the Houston Museum of Natural Science and Burke Baker Planetarium, the San Jacinto Museum of History, Johnson Space Center, and the Museum of Medical Science are a few of the museums. The above list is representative of the hundreds of cultural attractions available in the Houston area.

## Points of Interest

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Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, Port of Houston, Houston Ship Channel, the Galleria, Wortham Theatre Center, Nina Vance Alley Theatre, Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, George R. Brown Convention Center, Downtown Aquarium, Houston Astros' Minute Maid Park, Houston Texans' Reliant Stadium, The Connection (4 miles of enclosed, air-conditioned pedestrian ways which feature retail and service establishments and link more than 70 downtown buildings), art museums and the San Jacinto Battleground are all interesting places. Other items of interest include the Texas Medical Center, oil fields, petroleum refineries, chemical plants, and historic and contemporary churches. Come see all that the Sheldon community has to offer!

*To learn more about Sheldon, call (281) 727-2000, visit [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com), or contact us at*

## **VISION STATEMENT**

**Sheldon ISD aspires to be a premier district recognized for educational excellence which empowers all students to be college and career ready in a changing world.**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**Sheldon ISD will provide personalized learning opportunities to ensure all students graduate college and are career ready.**

## **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 by position or place and serve four-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

- Position #1, Candace Randall, Member
- Position #2, Latricia Archie, President
- Position #3, Darius Provost-Evans, Member
- Position #4, Fred Rivas, Member
- Position #5, Kristin Williams-White, Secretary
- Position #6, Devora Myles, Vice President
- Position #7, Erika Martinez, Member

The board usually meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00p.m. at the Dr. Donald Ney Administration Complex, 11411 C.E. King Parkway. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and outside the Ney Administration Complex 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 two hours' 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.

## **Administration**

Deputy Superintendent of Academics	Karen Gallow
Chief Financial Officer	Abraham George
Assistant Superintendent of Admin Services	Dr. Brenda Dearmon
Assistant Superintendent for Support Services	J.R. Webster
Assistant Superintendent of T & L	Dr. Donald Stewart
Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services	Juan Duenas
Executive Director of Special Education	Brooke Douget
Executive Director of Innovative Programs	Becky Zalesnik
Executive Director of Communications	Emily Conklin
Executive Director of Facilities & Sustainment	Dr. Raffat Saeed
Director of Human Resources	Eugene Williams
Director of Human Resources	Dr. RoxAnne Wyatt
Director of Career & Technology	Bonita Taylor
Director of Federal Programs & Grants	Tacarra Williams
Director of Athletics/Physical Education	Derek Fitzhenry
Director of Multilingual Programs	Suzanne Caballero
Director of Research Assessment & Data	Raechel Broussard
Director of Child Nutrition	Barbara Vasser
Director of Security & Emergency Operations	Leroy Bradley
Director of Technology	Andre Seals
Director of Early Childhood	Dr. Denise Mustin
Director of Fine Arts	Daniel Pfannstiel
Director of Student Services	Ashley Sampson
Director of Curriculum & Instruction	Rebecca Joseph
Director of Advances Academics	Heath Dear
Director of Counseling	Jennifer Williams
Director of Teaching & Learning	Jana Rolling
Accountant	Tammy Gibson
Computer Coordinator/Financial Services	Meena George
Constable Supervisor	Lt. B. Thurman

## Facility Directory

<p>C. E. King High School 8540 C. E. King Parkway Houston, Texas 77044 Principal –Dr. Jillian Howard (281) 727-3500 FAX (281) 459-7346</p>	<p>C. E. King 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Campus 8530 C. E. King Parkway Houston, Texas 77044 Principal – Jeralan Kannady (281) 727-3500 FAX (281) 459-7346</p>
<p>Sheldon Early College High School 8540 C. E. King Parkway Houston, Texas 77044 Dean of Instruction—Elyse McGinnis (281) 727-3043 FAX (281) 727-3074</p>	<p>KASE/DAEP 17010 Beaumont Highway Houston, Texas 77049 Principal – Jumana Mills (281) 456-6861 FAX (281) 456-6875</p>
<p>Micheal R. Null Middle School 12117 Garrett Road Houston, Texas 77044 Principal – Roberto Gonzalez (281) 436-2800 FAX (281) 436-2875</p>	<p>C. E. King Middle School 8530 C. E. King Parkway Houston, Texas 77044 Principal – Edward Taylor (281) 727-4300 FAX (281) 459-7452</p>
<p>L. E. Monahan Elementary 8901 Deep Valley Houston, Texas 77044 Principal – Jenita Boleware (281) 454-2900 FAX (281) 454-2975</p>	<p>H. M. Carroll Elementary 10210 C. E. King Parkway Houston, Texas 77044 Principal – Dr. Veronica Garza (281) 727-4100 FAX (281) 727-4175</p>
<p>Garrett Elementary 12017 Garrett Road Houston, Texas 77044 Principal – Jasmine Bell (281) 727-4200 FAX (281) 727-4275</p>	<p>Royalwood Elementary 7715 Royalwood Drive Houston, Texas 77049 Principal – Jesus Altamirano (281) 454-2700 FAX (281) 454-2775</p>
<p>Sheldon Lake Elementary 13002 Sheldon Community Drive Houston, Texas 77044 Principal- Jacqueline Burquez (281) 727-1100</p>	<p>Sheldon Elementary 17203 Hall Sheppard Houston, Texas 77049 Principal – Marcy Jackson (281) 456-6700 FAX (281) 456-6775</p>
<p>Stephanie Cravens Early Childhood Academy 13210 Tidwell Road Houston, Texas 77044 Principal – Maria Vives (281) 727-2100 FAX (281) 727-2175</p>	<p>Sheldon Early Learning Center 17010 Beaumont Highway Houston, Texas 77049 Director- Dana Goosby (281) 456-6880 FAX (281) 456-7452</p>
<p>Dr. Donald Ney Administration Complex 11411 C. E. King Parkway Houston, Texas 77044 (281) 727-2000</p>	<p>Sheldon Early Childhood Academy 17010 Beaumont Highway Houston, Texas 77049 Principal – Joel Leal (281) 456-6800 FAX (281) 456-6875</p>

# Employment

## Equal Employment Opportunity

*Policies DAA, DIA*

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

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not discriminate on the basis of sex and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may refer 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: JR Webster, Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services, [jameswebster@sheldonisd.com](mailto:jameswebster@sheldonisd.com), 281-727-2013. Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, email, or phone. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person.

The District designates and authorizes the following employee as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator for employees for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Eugene Williams Director of Human Resources, 11411 C. E. King Pkwy, Houston, Texas, 77044, [eugenewilliams@sheldonisd.com](mailto:eugenewilliams@sheldonisd.com) 281-727-2076.

## **Job Vacancy Announcements**

*Policy DC*

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the district's website. Current job vacancies are on-line at [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com).

## **Employment After Retirement**

*Policy DC*

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed in 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](http://www.trs.texas.gov)).

## **Contract and Noncontract Employment**

*Policy DC series*

State law requires the district to employ all full-time professional employees in positions requiring a certificate from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and nurses under probationary, term, or continuing contracts. Employees in all other positions are employed at-will or by a contract that is not subject to the procedures for nonrenewal or termination under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. The paragraphs that follow provide a general description of the employment arrangements used by the district.

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

For those with less experience, the probationary period will be three school years (i.e., three one-year contracts) with an optional fourth school year if the board determines 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 or two-year contract that is not subject to the provisions for nonrenewal or termination under the Texas Education Code. All professional personnel must be approved by the school board.

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

## **Certification and Licenses**

*Policies DBA, DF*

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

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

## **Recertification of Employment Authorization**

*Policy DC*

At the time of hire all employees must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) and present documents to verify identity and employment authorization. Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization, or employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact Human Resources if you have any questions regarding reverification of employment authorization.

## **Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing**

*Policy CQ, DHE*

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

### **Employees Required to Have a Commercial Driver's License.**

Any employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to drug and alcohol testing. This includes all drivers who operate a motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people counting the driver, drivers of large vehicles, or drivers of vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements if their duties include driving a commercial motor vehicle. Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted for the following accidents. Any employee found in violation of the alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs will be terminated.

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.

District employees approved to drive a noncommercial District vehicle shall be subject to reasonable suspicion drug and alcohol testing as outlined in the Department of Transportation (DOT) rules. Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug testing policies and related educational material should contact the Human Resources department.

## **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 the Athletic Director or the Head Nurse by the first day of each semester.

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

## **Reassignments and Transfers**

*Policy DK*

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the superintendent or designee when the superintendent or designee determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the district. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Campus reassignments must be approved by the principal at the receiving campus except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time unless an extracurricular or supplemental duty assignment is part of a dual-assignment contract. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the district process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and district policy DGBA (Local).

- The employee Transfer Request form can be found online on the Human Resources Department webpage. As a professional courtesy, please discuss your transfer request with your principal or supervisor prior to completing the form.
- All transfer requests must be completed and submitted online by May 15th each year.
- Once the form is submitted, the appropriate supervisor will automatically receive a copy of the request form.
- There must be an “open” position, and the requesting employee must apply online for the position.
- The principal or supervisor may select, contact, and schedule interviews with those employees making the request. Please note: Completing the transfer request form does not guarantee an interview or a granted transfer.
- All transfers must be processed and finalized by the sending and receiving administrators by the last instructional day of the school year. (Exceptions to this may be due to employee promotion and/or needs of the district and must be approved by the Superintendent or designee.)

## **Workload and Work Schedules**

*Policies DEAB, DK, DL*

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

### Minimum School Day Hours:

- |   |   |                       |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| o | Early Childhood Academies -             | 8:25 a.m. - 3:55 p.m. |
| o | Elementary Campuses -                   | 7:45 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. |
| o | Middle School Campuses -                | 8:15 a.m. - 3:45 p.m. |
| o | 9th Grade Campus and King High School - | 7:05 a.m. - 2:44 p.m. |

\*Professional staff will be required to arrive early or stay late for professional development, meetings, tutorials, etc.

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

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

## **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. Employees should meet with their supervisor to discuss their needs and arrange break times.

## **Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications**

*Policies DK, DBA*

In schools receiving Title I funds; the district is required by 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 call the Human Resources department at 281-727-2077.

## **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 in the best interest of the district. Supervisors will consider outside employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

## **Performance Evaluation**

*Policy DN series*

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

Sheldon I.S.D. has adopted the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) instrument for teacher evaluations. Classroom observations of teachers shall be unannounced in accordance with Sheldon I.S.D. board policy.

### **Second Appraiser Request**

A teacher may request a second appraisal by another certified appraiser at one or both of the following times:

- (1) after receiving a written observation summary with which the teacher disagrees; or
- (2) after receiving a written summative annual appraisal report with which the teacher disagrees.

The teacher must make a written request for a second appraiser within ten (10) working days of receiving a written observation report or a summative appraisal. The written request must be submitted to the teacher's supervisor. The supervisor will notify the Executive Director of Human Resources who will assign a second appraiser from the list of certified appraisers.

Upon receiving a report, a nursing review committee may review a nurse's nursing services, qualifications, and quality of patient care, as well as the merits of a complaint concerning a nurse, and a determination or recommendation regarding a complaint.

## **Employee Involvement**

*Policies BQA, BQB*

At both the campus and district levels, Sheldon 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 campus administration.

## **Staff Development**

*Policy DMA*

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

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

# Compensation and Benefits

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## Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

*Policies DEA, DEC, DEAA, DEAB*

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as non-exempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See Overtime Compensation)

Classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time registered nurses, and full-time counselors will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the district's extra-duty pay schedule. Stipends are based on extra-duty assignments and will be adjusted or removed if the employee's assignment changes. Employees should contact the Director of Human Resources for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

## Paychecks

The Employee Access Center (EAC) is available for employees to view payroll voucher information. The website for viewing employee information is <http://eac.sheldonisd.com/eac5/login.aspx>. The EAC contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, the amount of leave accumulated, and vacation days available.

Paydays are scheduled for the 5th and 20th of each month unless that day falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday. In that case, payday will fall on the day preceding. The payroll schedule is subject to change due to unexpected circumstances.

## Electronic W-2 Option

W-2's are available for printing from the Employee Access Center. If employees need assistance, please contact the payroll department.

## Electronic Time Keeping/Attendance Program

Sheldon ISD has an electronic time keeping/attendance system. This information is being provided for use with the electronic time keeping/attendance program, not to replace existing board policy or handbook procedures. Employees are required to clock in and out for themselves. Employees are not permitted to clock in and out for each other, employees are not permitted to clock in outside of designated campus clock in spaces; furthermore, any employee who misuses the time clock will be subject to disciplinary action. If an employee misses a punch, they are required to notify the campus or department secretary in writing to explain the reason for the missed punch and request that the missed punch be corrected.

Listed below is each category of employee that is required to clock in and out and instructions for use. Exempt administrative personnel are not required to clock in and out using the electronic timekeeping system. For further information, contact the Payroll Department.

Instructions for Non-Exempt Employees (Hourly employees who are eligible for overtime, such as Paraprofessionals, Support, Auxiliary, Bus Drivers, Child Nutrition, Custodial Staff, Maintenance, etc.):

1. Clock in upon arriving at work.
2. Clock out using the break button option and clock back in for lunch.
3. Clock out upon leaving work.
4. If you leave the building for personal reasons—clock out and back in
5. Employees are required to work 40 hours per week. A normal workday is 8 hours per day as described on the districts' PEIMS work calendars.

Instructions for Campus Based Exempt Employees (Teachers; Certified Professionals):

1. Sign in and sign out each day utilizing the electronic timekeeping system. Teachers are required to clock in and out each day to facilitate substitute coverage, provide attendance reports in case of campus emergencies, and provide documentation for the Sheldon I.S.D. teacher attendance incentive program.

***Enforcement:*** Any employee found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Any improperly received/gained funds

will be reimbursed to the district. It remains the responsibility of each employee to ensure accurate documentation of actual time worked for the district.

## **Automatic Payroll Deposit**

Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of 10 days is necessary to activate this service. If it is necessary to change bank account information, an employee must give written notice and complete a new direct deposit form. Contact the Payroll Department for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

**\*Sheldon ISD reserves the right to debit an employee's bank account in the event of an overpayment.**

## **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. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

## **Overtime Compensation**

*Policy 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.

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless

they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, the workweek for district employees shall be 12:00 a.m. Saturday until 11:59 p.m. Friday.

Nonexempt employees may be compensated for overtime at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay for working more than 40 hours in any one week. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 hours (7.5 days) of comp time. This time must be taken before an employee can gain more compensatory time. After the employee has reached these limits, the employee shall be paid overtime compensation for additional overtime work.
- Comp time must be used in the duty year that it is earned. If an employee has unused compensatory time remaining at the end of a duty year the employee shall receive overtime pay.
- Use of comp time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval, as workload permits, or at the supervisor's direction.
- An employee may be required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration. Compensatory time shall be reported to the Benefits office in half day increments. Absences for compensatory time shall be reported in half day increments. Supervisors are advised to maintain a spreadsheet for time earned that is less than half day increments. When time accumulates to a half day, it is reported to the Benefits office to be posted to the employee's leave bank.
- Jobs worked sporadically are not considered in the compensatory time calculation. Example: a school bus driver who elects to sell tickets at the high school football game.
- The employer is not required to calculate compensatory time for volunteers that are employees who work at one job during the regular work week and volunteer to provide different services after hours at not compensation or nominal fee.
- The district reserves the right to pay approved overtime at the time and a half rate when it is in the district's best interest.
- Compensation paid to an employee for accrued compensatory time shall be paid at the regular rate earned by the employee at the time of payment. An employee who has accrued compensatory time off shall be paid for any unused compensatory time upon separation from employment.
- Exempt employees:

Exempt employees are not eligible for comp time; however, exempt employees may request a "Calendar Adjustment" for extenuating circumstances that may require them to alter their workdays. The exempt employee must complete a "Calendar Adjustment Request Form," which

must be pre-approved. All calendar adjustments require supervisor approval in order to authorize a day off later in the year to adjust for any days that the employee was required to work.

## **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

*Policy DEE*

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor and Chief Financial Officer 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 provided through TRS-Active Care, the statewide public school employee health insurance program. The district's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the board of trustees. Currently, Sheldon ISD contributes \$336 per month with the state contributing an additional \$75.00 per month. Employees eligible for health insurance coverage include the following:

- Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
- Employees who are not contributing TRS members and who are regularly scheduled to work 10 or more hours per week.

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

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each year or when they experience a qualifying event (e.g., marriage, divorce, birth, etc.) Employees have 30 days to make changes from the date of the qualifying event. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees on the Benefits page of the Human Resources website at [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com). In accordance with the Affordable Care Act, all employees must enroll or waive health coverage. Employees should contact the Benefits office for more information.

## **Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

*Policy CRD*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. A third-party administrator handles these

accounts and will enroll employees during open enrollment which takes place annually. First Financial is the third-party administrator for these accounts. Employees can access information about available benefits on the Benefits page of the Human Resources website at [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com). Employees should contact the Benefits office for more information.

## **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

*Policy CRE*

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from TASB, effective with an employee's first day at work.

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 direct Supervisor and the Benefits Office. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. See Workers' Compensation Benefits, page 35 for information on the use of paid leave for such absences.

## **Unemployment Compensation Insurance**

*Policy CRF*

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

## **Teacher Retirement**

*Policy DEG*

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four and one-half months are members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). 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 their supervisor and the Benefits Specialist 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](http://www.trs.texas.gov)).

## **Other Benefit Programs**

### **Sheldon ISD offers other benefits to employees:**

1. Athletic Pass—All Sheldon employees will receive free admission to athletic events when their employee ID badge is presented at the gate for home games.
2. Tuition free attendance for children of employees—Children of non-resident district employees shall be eligible to attend district schools.
3. Credit Union—Sheldon ISD has a partnership with United Community Credit Union. Employees have access to a variety of payroll deduction benefits (personal loans, auto loans, etc.)
4. Reimbursement at retirement—
  - a. The following leave provisions shall apply to state personal and local leave earned by employees who began service with the district on or before June 30, 2012. An employee who was employed on or before this date but who separates from employment for any reason other than retirement and is later rehired by the district shall meet the conditions of the reimbursement program in effect for those employed July 1, 2012, and after.

Upon retirement, an employee who has worked in the district for a minimum of three consecutive years prior to his or her retirement shall be entitled to receive his or her daily rate of pay, not to exceed the daily rate of a certified substitute teacher, for each day of unused local and state personal leave, as described within policy as STATE PERSONAL LEAVE and LOCAL LEAVE. If an employee dies while employed by the district, his or her beneficiary shall be entitled to this benefit, if the employee would have otherwise been qualified for the benefit.

To be eligible for the reimbursement of local and state personal leave, exempt employees must give a 90-day notice before the last day of employment, and nonexempt employees must give at least two weeks' notice prior to the last day of employment. Note that the employee must be retiring in good standing with the district, i.e., the employee is not being discharged or non-renewed.

If the employee is reemployed with the district, the days for which the employee received payment shall not be available to that employee. The rate established by

the Board shall be in effect until the Board adopts a new rate. Any changes to the rate shall apply beginning with the school year following the adoption of the rate change.

- b. The following leave provisions shall apply to local leave earned by employees who began service with the district beginning on July 1, 2012. [See LOCAL LEAVE above]

An employee who separates from employment with the district shall be eligible for reimbursement of local leave under the following conditions:

The employee is retiring and is not being discharged or non-renewed.

The employee provides advance written notice of the intent to retire. Exempt employees must provide written notice at least 90 days before the last day of employment. Nonexempt employees must provide written notice at least two weeks before the last day of employment.

The employee has at least ten years of continuous service with the district.

The employee shall be reimbursed for each day of local leave, at a rate established by the Board, not to exceed the daily rate of pay of a certified substitute teacher.

If the employee is reemployed with the district, the days for which the employee received payments shall not be available to that employee.

The rate established by the Board shall be in effect until the Board adopts a new rate. Any changes to the rate shall apply beginning with the school year following the adoption of the rate change.

5. Teacher Attendance Incentive—Classroom teachers who require a substitute are eligible to receive \$400 per semester for perfect attendance OR \$200 per semester for no more than two absences. All other district employees (except classroom teachers requiring a substitute) with perfect attendance for the year are eligible to receive a \$50 gift card. The award will be given only to those who continue as employees of Sheldon ISD. After being notified of the award all gift cards must be picked up according to the timeline set by the Human Resources Department.
6. Employee Wellness Center—Located by the Boy’s Field House at C. E. King High School. Please contact the secretary to Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services at 281-727-2011 in order to gain access to the Wellness Center.

7. Recruitment Stipend--Sheldon ISD offers a \$200 recruitment stipend to show appreciation to eligible, full-time employees of the district who assist in getting the word out concerning the great career opportunities that exist in Sheldon ISD. This stipend will be paid in April of each school year. To receive the stipend both individuals must remain in Sheldon ISD until April in order to receive the stipend.

Guidelines that determine an employee's eligibility for the stipend require a recruitment questionnaire to be completed by newly hired teachers during their appointment with Human Resources. Questionnaires received after the new teacher leaves Human Resources will not be accepted. The questionnaire asks how the new teacher learned about job opportunities in Sheldon and if a current employee is listed as the source, if eligible, the employee is rewarded with a recruitment stipend in December of the current school year.

- Recruitment Stipend (Additional Guidelines):
  - Central Office and Campus Administrators are not eligible for the recruitment stipend.
  - Former or current Sheldon paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, AVID tutors, etc. are not considered "new" to the district when they complete the state requirements to become fully certified teachers and are hired in Sheldon.
  - The recruitment stipend will be reduced to \$100 when a former Sheldon ISD teacher is recruited by an eligible employee and returns to the district after he/she has been separated for at least three years.
  - The maximum number of recruitment stipends that an eligible employee can receive is three in any given year.
8. Paid Service Incentive Days—Professional and paraprofessional employees on a 226- or 240-day work calendar, who have more than 10 consecutive years of service in the district, shall receive 5 paid service incentive days in addition to their unpaid non-duty days each year.
  9. Degree/Lifelong Learning Incentives:
    - a. Non-Certified/Auxiliary Personnel are eligible to receive \$500 for completion of an associate degree; \$1000 for completion of a bachelor's degree; \$1500 for completion of a master's degree
    - b. Certified Personnel whose positions do not require a master's degree are eligible for the master's degree incentive. \$500 upon completion of 12 hours; \$1,000 upon completion of 24 hours; and \$1,500 upon completion of the master's degree

**\*All transcripts must be submitted by September 15th and February 15th each year**

# Leaves and Absences

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*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 should call the Benefits Office for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums, and requirements for communicating with the district.

Leave must be used in half day increments. However, if an employee is taking intermittent family and medical leave, leave shall be recorded in one-hour increments. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state and local leave. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order:

- Compensatory
- Local
- State
- Non-duty or Paid Service Incentive Days
- Vacation Days

Employees must follow district and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate form or certification. All absences must be entered into the AESOP system. Pre-planned absences require the approval of the immediate supervisor. Any unapproved absences or absences beyond accumulated or available paid leave shall result in deduction from the employee's pay.

## **Extended Absence Without Physician's Note or Supervisor Approval**

If an employee is absent for **more than three (3) consecutive workdays** without providing a valid **physician's note or written approval from their supervisor**, the district will consider the absence undocumented. In such cases, the employee will be **docked for each additional day of absence beyond the third day**.

For purposes of this procedure, "docked" means that the employee's pay will be reduced in accordance with the number of undocumented days missed.

Employees are encouraged to communicate promptly with their supervisor and provide the required documentation to avoid any loss of pay.

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

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

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

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

personal illness—the employee's fitness to return to work.

The 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. The district contribution toward health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the district as they were prior to the leave. Otherwise, the district does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave. Under TRS-Active Care rules, an employee is no longer eligible for insurance through the district after six months of unpaid leave other than FML. If an employee's unpaid leave extends for more than six months, the district will provide the employee with notice of COBRA rights.

## **Personal Leave**

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to 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. Personal leave may be used for two general purposes: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

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

**Discretionary.** Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a 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.

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

## **State Sick Leave**

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

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

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

## **Local Leave**

All employees shall earn paid local leave days per school year in accordance with the following schedule and administrative regulations. The number of leave days available will be posted to your check or earnings statement on the first payroll in September.

- Employees working 226-260 days will be credited with 7 local days.
- Employees working 207-225 days will be credited with 6 local days.
- Employees working 206 days or less will be credited with 5 local days.

## **Non-duty Days**

Non-duty days are days for which a year-round employee are not paid and are included within the work calendar of the employee as a condition of employment. Non-duty days are designed to allow some flexibility in the work calendar for 226- and 240-day employees who work in departments where the nature of the work does not allow them the option of closing (Payroll, Human Resources, Curriculum, etc.)

Non-duty days are categorized as leave and will be documented in a similar fashion as all other types of leave. The number of non-duty days credited will depend on the difference in the calendar workdays between July 1 and June 30. Employees on a 226-day work calendar will receive 10 non-duty days. Employees on a 240-day work calendar will receive 5 non-duty days. Non-duty days do not take the place of a required workday; employees must work their scheduled/contracted number of days. Employees on a 226-day work calendar must work a total of 226 days; employees on a 240-day calendar must work 240 days. Non-duty days will not be paid in any fashion or be cashed out at any time.

Non-duty days must be taken during the current duty year and shall be taken at such times that will least interfere with the performance of the employee's duties. Employees are required to obtain advance approval from his or her supervisor before taking non-duty days and must provide sufficient notice to allow the supervisor to consider the district's staffing needs before approval of non-duty schedules.

Non-duty days must be used during the current duty year or prior to December 31 of the following duty year in which they are earned. Non-duty days accumulated in the previous duty year will be lost according to the procedures established by the Superintendent.

## **Paid Service Incentive Days**

Professional and paraprofessional employees on a 226-day or 240-day work calendar, who have more than 10 consecutive years of service in the district, shall receive 5 paid service incentive days in addition to their unpaid non-duty days each year. Employees who are eligible to receive

paid service incentive days must have approval from their supervisor prior to scheduling time off.

Employees must use all paid service incentive days during the current year in which they are earned. The days will expire on June 30 of the year in which they are earned. Paid service incentive days retain no payoff amount when an employee ends employment with the district through either separation, termination, or retirement.

### **Vacation Days**

Vacation days are designed for employees who work a 260-day work calendar. Employees on this calendar with less than 10 years of service accrue 10 days of vacation a year. Employees with more than 10 years of service will accrue 15 days of vacation a year. Vacation days must be taken during the current duty year and shall be taken at such times that will least interfere with the performance of the employee's duties. Employees are required to obtain advance approval from his or her supervisor before taking vacation days and must provide sufficient notice to allow the supervisor to consider the district's staffing needs before approval of vacation schedule.

Employees who leave the district after 1 year of service will be paid for unused vacation days accrued during that year.

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

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

**Leave Entitlement.** The FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

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

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

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

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

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

Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to the same job or one nearly identical to it with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions. An employer may not interfere with an individual's FMLA rights or retaliate against someone for using or trying to use FMLA leave, opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA, or being involved in any proceeding under or related to the FMLA.

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

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

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

**Use of Leave.** An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary in accordance with board policy. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

**Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave.** Employees may choose or employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA. In order to use paid leave for FMLA, employees must comply with the district's normal paid leave policies.

**Employee Responsibilities.** Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days' notice is not possible, the employee must

provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

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

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

**Enforcement.** An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

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

For additional information:

1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627  
[www.wagehour.dol.gov](http://www.wagehour.dol.gov)

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

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

**Use of Paid Leave.** FML runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leaves, 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 both employed by the district are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of FML to care for a parent with a serious health condition; or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. Military caregivers 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. If certification of the employee's ability to perform essential job function is required, 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.

**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.

**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)).

**District Contact.** Employees that require FML or have questions should contact the Benefits Specialist in the Human Resources 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. An employee's notification of the need for extended absence due to the employee's own medical condition shall be accepted as a request for temporary disability leave. The request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days.

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

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

## **Employee Sick Leave Pool**

### *POLICY DEC LOCAL*

The purpose of the Sick Leave Pool is to provide additional sick leave days to Sheldon ISD employees in the event of a catastrophic illness or injury. Catastrophic is defined as of a serious nature, not a passing disorder or temporary ailment, requiring treatment by a physician and/or hospital admittance. Although some degree of permanency is usually involved, the disease/injury need not necessarily be incurable or permanent. Days may be requested from the Pool only after the member has exhausted all accumulated paid state and local days. Employees that receive vacation/ non-duty days must also exhaust all of those days.

The sick leave pool program allows employees to voluntarily donate accrued STATE PERSONAL or LOCAL LEAVE to another employee.

Donated leave days will be exchanged on a **day-for-day basis**. Each donated day will count as one full day of leave for the receiving employee.

### **Pool Administrator**

The pool administrator shall be responsible for receiving and processing requests for the donation of sick leave pool days. The pool administrator may individually or with a team put together by the pool administrator, grant requests for sick leave pool days. It should be noted that to ensure confidentiality, the team is recommended to be as few people as reasonably practical when reviewing medical information.

### **Pool Creation**

An employee with a catastrophic illness or who has a family member with a catastrophic illness may request a sick leave pool be created when the employee has exhausted all other available leave days, compensatory time and (vacation or non-duty days) before applying for sick leave pool days.

### **Eligibility**

All full-time personnel of the Sheldon Independent School district earning leave benefits from the District shall be eligible for participation.

### **Donations – Up to 10 State Personal / Local Days**

- A. The donation of leave to the Sick Leave Pool is voluntary on the part of the donor.
- B. Individuals donating leave may donate 10 days per school year to any one recipient.
- C. Donated days not used will not be deducted from the donors leave balance unless used.
- D. Employees may not solicit individual fellow employees for donations.
- E. The donor of the sick leave days is confidential to the extent provided by law, and the individual or amounts shall not be disclosed to another party.

Donated days pledged to the pool are not available for use by the donor.

### **Regulation Concerning Granting of Sick Leave Pool Days**

- A. Conditions known to exist by the same employee that may have been diagnosed or treated within the six-month period prior to employment in the Sick Leave Pool will not be

covered under the provision of the Sick Leave Pool until six months following the employment date.

B. Sick Leave Pool days shall be granted only for absences for working days and will not be granted for holidays, vacation days or other such days for which the member is not paid.

C. The maximum number of Sick Leave Pool days that may be granted to an employee during the school year (September 1 through August 31) will be sixty (60) days.

D. If a member returns to work who has received less than sixty (60) days from the Sick Leave Pool returns to work and then is ill again with the same illness, he/she may apply to the Sick Leave Pool for the remainder of the sixty (60) day limit. Each Separate illness applied for must meet the initial criteria of just cause.

E. The Sick Leave Pool Committee will determine if an illness/injury qualifies as catastrophic. If the illness/injury qualifies, the Sick Leave Pool Committee will provide notice to the Sick Leave Administrator indicating the maximum number of days allowed for reimbursement. The district will reimburse the member in a regular payroll check, based on the actual days docked that are within the maximum number of days allowed by the Sick Leave Pool. If approval is received prior to the payroll cut-off date, reimbursement of days docked may be on the current payroll check.

F. A contributor will lose the right to utilize the benefits of the Pool by:

1. Termination of employment in the Sheldon Independent School District.

### **Procedures for Applying for a Sick Leave Pool Days**

A. Should the member experience a catastrophic illness or injury necessitating the need for additional days after all paid leave days and vacation days have been used, the member may submit a request for days from the Pool.

B. A member who requests days from a Pool must submit to Sick Leave Administrator in Human Resources no later than thirty (30) days upon application, the following information:

1. Physician's statement which includes
  - a. Identification of the nature of the illness and/or extent of the injury.
  - b. Date of onset of this particular concern.
  - c. Anticipated date eligible to return to work on a full-time basis.
  - d. The Sick Leave Pool Committee may refuse to consider requests that does not contain required information.

### **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 employee's supervisor in order for a "first report of injury" report to be completed. 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 not responsible for purposes of criminal liability.

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

## **Jury Duty**

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 with 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 of 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 paid leave when engaged in authorized training or duty ordered by proper authority. Paid military leave is limited to 15 days each fiscal year. In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service.

**Reemployment after Military Leave.** Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. Employees returning to work following military leave should contact their immediate supervisor and the Directors of Human Resources. 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 Specialist for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **Employee Relations and Communications**

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### **Employee Recognition and Appreciation**

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities also include “Employees of the Year,” service awards for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40 years of service, and retirement recognition.

### **District Communications**

Throughout the school year, the district publishes information in newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. Additionally, the District operates Facebook and Twitter accounts to keep parents, employees, and community members informed about District activities and achievements.

## **Complaints and Grievances**

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### *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 available online at [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com).

# Employee Conduct and Welfare

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## Employee Dress Code

### Dress and Grooming

All district employees should be clean, neat, well groomed, and dressed properly and in such a manner appropriate for their assignments. All employees must wear a visible district issued employee identification badge at all times while working. Employees serve as role models by exemplifying the highest standard of professional appearance in addition to proper grooming and hygiene. District employees who work through the summer are to abide by the established professional standards year-round.

**Female employees** shall wear dresses, suits, pantsuits, skirts and blouses. Dresses should be professional and of appropriate length. Dress slacks are permissible with shirts/blouses. Cropped pants/Capri pants are permissible if worn with professional attire (i.e. dress shoes, shirt or blouse). Capri pants should be worn below the knee when standing. Leggings, tights, or any type of form fitting pants are not permitted. Leggings are only permissible if worn underneath a dress of appropriate length. Blouses should be appropriately sized and not low cut, see-through or revealing. Sleeves should be tight enough to prevent undergarments from showing. Female employees may wear earrings in their ear lobes. Nose rings are not permitted.

**Male employees** shall have their hair neatly trimmed at all times. Mustaches and beards are acceptable if neatly trimmed. Male employees should wear dress/polo shirts with collars and slacks anytime they are on duty.

**Auxiliary employees** in maintenance, custodial and food service positions are required to wear uniforms and are to comply with dress and grooming guidelines specified by district policies and their supervisors. Transportation employees are to abide by the dress code provided for them in their Sheldon ISD Transportation Department handbook.

**Spirit Days** may be declared by campus administrators. Jeans may be worn on spirit days if worn with a campus/district shirt. Jeans must meet the requirements of the student dress code. Spirit days will be limited to Fridays unless approved by the supervisor.

### **The following list of inappropriate items are not permitted:**

Shorts/short sets  
Short skirts  
Flip flops of any kind  
Beach shoes  
House shoes/slippers  
Visible tattoos

- Spandex or similar tight clothing
- Revealing or provocative skirts, dresses, or blouses
- Tank tops, visible strapless tops or dresses (jackets may be worn over these items)
- Tennis shoes in the office setting (spirit days exception)
- No visible body piercing

The supervisor has the final say on dress code issues on his/her campus/department. These are the minimal expectations for employee dress, and the supervisor may set a higher professional standard for dress on his/her campus/department. Any exception to this policy must be approved by the immediate supervisor and the superintendent.

Clarification regarding flip-flops:

Any shoe made of foam, plastic, or leather that goes between the toes and is backless, such as the following examples, is considered to be a flip-flop and would not be permitted:



The following styles (examples) of sandals are permitted:



## **Standards of Conduct**

### *Policy DH*

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

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

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines, including intentionally making a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the superintendent first learns of the incident.

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 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, schoolboard 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 or distribution of controlled substances and/or abuse of 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 provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

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 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.

Employees who believe they have been discriminated against 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 employee should report the complaint 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 available on the district website at

[www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com). To access DIA (Local) click on the “About Us” tab; click on “District Policy;” search DIA Local.

## **Harassment of Students**

*Policies 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 suspects 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 44 and Bullying, page 64 for additional information.

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

According to policy DHB (Legal):

“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 acquaintances. 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. Suggestions that a romantic relationship is desired after the student graduates, including post-graduation plans for dating or marriage.

11. Any other acts tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with the student.

*19 TAC 249.3(50)*

A superintendent may notify SBEC of any educator misconduct that the superintendent believes in good faith may be subject to sanctions by SBEC. 19 TAC 249.14(d)

Policy FFH (Local) is available online at [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com).

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

*Policies DHB, DG, 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, to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services (CPS), or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 24 hours of the event that led to the suspicion.

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 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 report suspected child abuse 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 suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics.

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

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

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

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com) by searching policy FFG. 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, e-mail 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 computer or network resources
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the technology resources are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use. Employees are required to abide by the provisions of the 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 legal action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the Human Resources Department.

## **Personal Use of Electronic Communications**

### *Policy DH, CQ*

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

As role models for the district's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic communications as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic communications interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for 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.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:
  - o Confidentiality of student records [See Policy FL]
  - o Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law [See Policy DH]
  - o Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses [See Policy GBA]
  - o Copyright law [See Policy CY]
  - o Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system [See Policy DH]

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

# Electronic Communications between Employees, Students, and Parents

## Policy DH

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the superintendent or a campus principal, may communicate through electronic communications with students who are currently enrolled in the district. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. All other employees are prohibited from communicating with students who are enrolled in the district through electronic communications. Employees are not required to provide students with their personal phone number or e-mail address.

An employee is not subject to 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 communications with students:

- *Electronic communications* includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic communications also include all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.
- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a communication; however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic communications*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a communication.

- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

An employee who uses electronic communications to communicate 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.
  - o The employee shall include at least one of the student’s parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message.
  - o The employee shall include his or her immediate supervisor as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and supervisor receive the same message.
- 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 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:
  - o 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]
  - o Copyright law [Policy CY]
  - o Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DHB]
- Upon request from the administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic

communications 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 e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication. An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.
- 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 her 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 electronic communication.

## **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 service.

### **Employee Agreement for Acceptable Use of the Electronic Communications Systems Technology Services Acceptable Use Policy**

#### **Introduction:**

This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) sets forth the guidelines and rules for the appropriate use of technology services provided by Sheldon Independent School District. All students, staff, and visitors who utilize the district's technology resources are required to adhere to this policy.

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the responsible and ethical use of technology services within the school district. It aims to establish a safe and productive digital environment for all users, while promoting academic achievement, professional development, and digital citizenship.

## **Policy:**

**Responsible Use:** Users must utilize technology resources responsibly and in a manner that supports educational and professional goals. This includes but is not limited to:

- a. Using technology services in conjunction with academic or professional responsibilities.
- b. Protecting personal account credentials and not sharing or using others' accounts.
- c. Respecting copyright laws and intellectual property rights when utilizing digital content.
- d. Exercising responsible digital communication and refraining from engaging in cyberbullying, harassment, or unauthorized disclosure of personal information.
- e. Respecting network security and refraining from attempting to gain unauthorized access or disrupting network functionality.

**Appropriate Content:** Users must access and create content that complies with the school's guidelines for appropriate and legal usage. This includes but is not limited to:

- a. Accessing only educational and relevant content while using district technology resources.
- b. Prohibiting the use, creation, or distribution of content that is inappropriate, offensive, and discriminatory.
- c. Utilizing filtering software and/or firewalls to prevent access to inappropriate websites or material.
- d. Reporting any inappropriate or concerning content encountered while using district technology resources.

**Device Usage:** Users are responsible for the proper and secure use of devices provided by the district. This includes but is not limited to:

- a. Adhering to any district policies regarding device care, charging, storage, and usage.
- b. Refraining from installing or downloading unauthorized software, applications, or files.
- c. Not tampering with or attempting to modify district-provided devices' hardware or software configurations.
- d. Immediately reporting any device malfunctions, losses, or thefts to the appropriate staff.

**Privacy and Data Security:** Users must respect privacy rights and protect sensitive data. This includes but is not limited to:

- a. Respecting the privacy of other users and refraining from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of personal information.
- b. Not storing, transmitting, or sharing sensitive or confidential data without proper authorization.
- c. Abiding by any district policies or legal requirements related to data protection and privacy.

**Non-Compliance and Consequences:**

Failure to comply with this Acceptable Use Policy may result in disciplinary action, loss of access privileges, academic or professional consequences, and/or legal ramifications, as deemed appropriate by the school district. The severity of the consequences will depend on the nature and repetition of the violation.

**Conclusion:**

By utilizing the district's technology services, users acknowledge their understanding and agreement to comply with this Technology Services Acceptable Use Policy. The school district reserves the right to modify or amend this policy as needed, and users will be notified of any such changes.

Sheldon ISD AI Acceptable Use Policy

## Purpose and Vision

The purpose of this policy is to clearly define the acceptable and unacceptable uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools within our district. Our goals are to:

- Ensure that AI is used as a tool to facilitate learning and foster creativity rather than as a means to circumvent the academic process.
- Establish clear guidelines for student work and underscore that the work submitted must be the student's own effort—with AI acting solely as support.
- Maintain academic integrity, safeguarding student privacy and complying with all applicable data protection regulations.

## Scope and Audience

**Students:**

- This policy applies to all students using district-provided devices and networks.
- Students must use AI solely for approved educational purposes and with explicit guidelines for protecting personal and academic integrity.

## Teachers:

- Teachers are responsible for modeling ethical AI use, ensuring that AI compliments rather than replaces the creative and critical work of students.
- They will also guide students on proper AI use, including disclosure and citation requirements where AI support is used.

## AI Use Guidelines for Students

### General Principles

- **Enhancement, Not Replacement:**
  - AI tools are to be used to enhance learning and support creative work. Students are expected to generate original content with AI serving as an assistance tool, not as a substitute for their own effort
- **Integrity and Accountability:**
  - Work submitted must represent a student's own ideas and efforts. Any assignment found to consist of more than 15% AI-generated content will be considered a violation of academic integrity.

### Data Privacy

- **No Personal Data:**
  - Students are prohibited from inputting any personal or identifying information (e.g., names, grades, addresses) into AI tools.
- **Compliance:**
  - All AI use must conform to applicable data protection and privacy laws that govern school data.

### Approved AI Tools for Students

- **Authorized Platforms:**
  - **OpenAI's ChatGPT and other authorized AI's** are approved for student work. These tools have been vetted to ensure data privacy and compliance with regulatory standards.
- **Unapproved Tools:**
  - Students must not use any prohibited AI platforms on school devices or networks without formal consent from the district.

### Transparency and Citation

- **Disclosure Requirement:**

- Any usage of AI tools in producing academic work must be clearly disclosed and properly cited according to teacher guidelines.
- **Attribution:**
  - Students should indicate the extent to which AI contributed to their work, ensuring that the final submission reflects the student’s own intellectual effort.

## **AI Use Guidelines for Teachers**

### **Instructional Support**

- **Tool as a Resource:**
  - Teachers should encourage students to view AI as a resource to support idea generation, research, and revision—not as a device to produce final assignments.
- **Guidance and Monitoring:**
  - In class assignments involving AI, teachers must provide clear instructions about acceptable use and regularly monitor student work to ensure compliance with academic standards.
- **Verification and Checking**
  - Teachers are encouraged to use available tools to help identify AI-generated content in student submissions. This includes, but is not limited to:
    - <https://www.zerogpt.com/>
  - These tools serve as aids for educators when assessing the originality of student work while maintaining fair and accurate evaluation practices.

## **Data Privacy and Professional Responsibility**

- **Protecting Sensitive Information:**
  - Teachers must never input personally identifiable or sensitive student information into any AI tool.
- **Modeling Best Practices:**
  - Educators are expected to use AI responsibly in their professional tasks and to advise students on similar best practices in their assignments and personal projects.

# Monitoring, Reporting, and Enforcement

## Reporting Incidents

- **IT Oversight:**
  - The IT department is responsible for technical monitoring of AI tool usage, while campus staff will address issues directly related to misuse.
- **Incident Reporting:**
  - Any suspected misuse of AI—including violations of academic integrity or data privacy—must be reported immediately following established district protocols.

## Consequences of Misuse

- **Student Violations:**
  - If any student work is determined to be more than 15% generated by AI (beyond the acceptable support threshold), it will be marked as plagiarism. Disciplinary actions will follow as outlined in the student code of conduct.
- **Teacher Violations:**
  - Failure to supervise or guide proper AI use, or any breach of data privacy, may result in disciplinary action in accordance with district policies.

# Approved Technologies and Future Considerations

## Permitted AI Tools

- **Students:**
  - Only Co-Pilot and Gemini are approved for educational assignments.
- **Teachers:**
  - Teachers may use the above tools for classroom support. For personal productivity, all staff are encouraged to access appropriate platforms while maintaining strict data privacy protocols.

## Conclusion

Our district is committed to leveraging AI in a way that supports and enhances learning while upholding our core values of academic integrity, equity, and data privacy. All stakeholders are required to adhere to these guidelines, ensuring that AI tools are used responsibly and ethically.

By doing so, we prepare our students for the future and maintain a supportive, innovative educational environment.

## **Criminal History Background Checks**

*Policy DBAA*

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

## **Employee Arrests and Convictions**

*Policy DH*

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

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

## **Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention**

*Policies DH*

Sheldon 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 DH (Local) regarding employee drug use can be accessed at [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com).

## **Tobacco and E-Cigarette Use**

*Policies DH, FNCD GKA*

State law prohibits smoking, using tobacco products, or using e-cigarettes on all district-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off campus. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. Drivers of district-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking, using tobacco, or using 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.

## **Fraud and Financial Impropriety**

*Policy CAA*

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

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties

- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district

## **Conflict of Interest**

### *Policy DBD*

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

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

## **Gifts and Favors**

### *Policy DBD*

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

## **Copyrighted Materials**

### *Policy 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 communications, including motion pictures and other audiovisual works, are to be used in the classroom for

instructional purposes only. Duplication is to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or backup of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

## **Associations and Political Activities**

### *Policy DGA*

The district will not directly or indirectly discourage employees from participating in political affairs or require any employee to join any group, club, committee, organization, or association. Employees may join or refuse to join any professional association or organization.

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

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

## **Charitable Contributions**

### *Policy DG*

The Board or any employee may not directly or indirectly require or coerce an employee to make a contribution to a charitable organization or in response to a 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 fund raiser or attending a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions.

## **Safety**

### *Policy CK series*

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

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

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 David Baxter, Director of Transportation, [davidbaxter@sheldonisd.com](mailto:davidbaxter@sheldonisd.com) 281-727-2013.

## **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 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.

## **Children in the Workplace**

Sheldon ISD requests that employees make arrangements for childcare so that employees are able to fulfill their job duties. In the event that outside arrangements are not possible, employees may bring their children to work only after receiving prior approval from their supervisor. Staff children (enrolled and not enrolled) are not to be in the classroom or work environment (duty stations, tutorials, etc.) while the employee is on duty during the workday. Employees who have approval from their supervisor to bring their children to work must complete a "Waiver and Release of Liability" form and submit it to their immediate supervisor.

## **Asbestos Management Plan**

*Policy CKA*

The district is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each school. A copy of the district's management plan is kept in the Maintenance Department 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 on exterior doors. 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.

## **Other Topics**

### **Parking Permits**

All vehicles parked on campus must be parked in designated parking spaces (student, staff, visitor) and have the appropriate student or staff permit. All vehicles must have current registration. Any violation of these requirements may result in tickets issued by law

enforcement. Parking permits can be obtained by contacting Security & Emergency Management. For more information about employee parking permits, please contact Security & Emergency Management at 281-727-1312.

### **Equipment, Desktop, and Laptop Equipment**

Sheldon ISD provides equipment such as desktop computers, laptop computers, LCDs, and sound amplification systems for teachers and students to enhance the teaching and learning

process. This equipment is for classroom use. Sometimes individually approved laptops or other equipment may be taken home by following the campus or department check out procedures. The equipment remains the property of Sheldon ISD and must be regarded with care when checked out. Equipment that is checked out from a campus or department should be documented and include a return date.

Any misuse or failure to return equipment after the specified time should be reported to the campus principal or department supervisor. Failure to abide by the above is considered a violation of district policy and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees are financially responsible for all equipment that is checked out to them. If equipment is returned in need of repair, the employee is financially responsible.

## **General Procedures**

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### **Emergency School Closing**

The district may close schools because of severe weather, epidemics and 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 television stations:

KHOU—Channel 11  
KPRC—Channel 2  
KTRK—Channel 13  
KIAH—Channel 39  
KRIV—Channel 26

Sheldon ISD will also publicize school closings on [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com); 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 Business 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 Chief Financial Officer for additional information on purchasing procedures.

All items purchased by the district will remain the property of the district if the employee is reassigned or leaves the district.

## **Name and Address Changes**

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Payroll Department office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. The form to process a change in personal information can be obtained from the Payroll Department website at [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com).

## **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 e-mail 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.
- Information that reveals whether they have family members.
- Personal e-mail address

The choice to not allow public access to this information may be made at any time by submitting a written request to the Directors of Human Resources. New or terminated employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information will be released to the public.

## Facility Use

*Policies DGA, GKD*

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The Executive Director of Facilities & Sustainmmt is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Call 281-727-1425 to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

## Termination of Employment

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### Resignations

*Policy DFE*

**Contract Employees.** Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received at least 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Superintendent or designee. 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 60. 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 their supervisor at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

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

## **Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees**

### *Policies DF Series*

Employees on probationary and term contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be non-renewed 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. 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**

### *Policy DCD*

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See Complaints and Grievances, page 50.)

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 TEC §22.093 requires principals to report misconduct of noncertified employees to the superintendent.

## **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. TEC §22.085 lists the reasons an employee must be discharged. 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 Interviews and Procedures**

*Policies DC and CY*

Exit interviews are online for all employees leaving the district (<https://forms.gle/rFiHY1GkSGyRbnkL9>). Separating employees are asked to provide the district with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the district with feedback on his or her employment experience. All district keys, books, property, including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references is provided on the exit form, which must be signed off on by the employee and the supervisor at the time of separation.

## **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. “Reported criminal history” means any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions including arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal information, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction that is obtained by a means other than the Fingerprint-based Applicant Clearinghouse of Texas (FACT).

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

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

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

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

## **Student Issues**

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### **Equal Educational Opportunities**

*Policies FB, FFH*

In an effort to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Sheldon 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 of students based on any of the reasons listed above should be directed to The Assistant Superintendent of Support Services, James Webster.

## **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 and must adhere to the Sheldon I.S.D. Grading and Reporting Procedures. 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 Director of Student Services for assistance.

## **Parent and Student Complaints**

### *Policy FNG*

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

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

## **Administering Medication to Students**

*Policy FFAC*

Only designated employees may administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. Exceptions apply to the self-administration of asthma medication, medication for anaphylaxis (e.g., EpiPen<sup>®</sup>), and medication for diabetes management, if the medication is self-administered in accordance with district policy and procedures. A student who must take any other medication during the school day must bring a written request from his or her parents and the medicine in its original, properly labeled container. Contact the principal or school nurse for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

## **Dietary Supplements**

*Policies DH, FFAC*

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

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

*Policy FFAC*

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

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

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

## **Student Conduct and Discipline**

*Policies in the FN series and FO series*

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

## **Student Attendance**

*Policy FEB*

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

## **Bullying**

*Policy FFI*

Bullying is defined by §TEC 37.0832. All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying, including cyberbullying, to campus administrators. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and is available online at [www.sheldonisd.com](http://www.sheldonisd.com). Click on "About Us"; Click on "Board of Trustees"; Click on "Board Policy Online"; Search policy FFI (Local)

## **Hazing**

*Policy FNCC*

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of "initiation rights" 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.

# Energy Management Policy

## Mission Statement:

Recognizing our responsibility as Trustees of Sheldon I.S.D, we believe that every effort should be made to comply with Senate Bill 12 and conserve energy and natural resources. We also believe that energy efficient operations will reduce operating costs and is in the best interest of the district. As a result, we are establishing this Energy Management Policy which is to be implemented within each of our facilities and around all of our campuses. It is desired, through this policy, to produce a safe and productive environment for our students, while simultaneously providing prudent management of our financial and energy resources.

## Statement of Concerns:

The district trustees are concerned about current and projected energy costs, the availability and procurement of electrical energy resulting from the deregulation of the electrical industry, and the power requirements facing the district due to current population growth patterns within the area. As a result, the development and implementation of a comprehensive, yet flexible, energy policy is believed to be in the best interest of the district.

## Commitment to Implementation of Program:

Implementation of this policy shall be the joint responsibility of the trustees, administrators, staff and support personnel. The success of the policy is dependent upon total cooperation from every level within the system. Operation of the department shall be given oversight by the manager of Energy Management Department.

## Energy Management Department:

The Energy Management Department will develop a comprehensive program for energy efficient operation around the district. The goal of this program shall be to maximize energy efficiency throughout the district with proper consideration given to environmental and safety issues. The Energy Management Department will then be responsible for the implementation, operation and enforcement of the program. In addition, the department will:

- 1.) Evaluate energy rates and utility provider proposals to obtain the most reliable and cost-effective energy sources available to the district.
- 2.) Routinely review efficiency improvements within pertinent industries and recommend new, more efficient equipment, systems and operating techniques.
- 3.) Work with campus principals and managers of other departments to develop an atmosphere of cooperation, and to establish acceptable operating practices among their staff and within their departmental practices.
- 4.) Annually review and revise these standard practices, as needed.
- 5.) Develop and promote educational energy awareness programs.

*Energy Purchase-* The Energy Management Department will be responsible for negotiations and purchase of energy required by the district for both current and projected future needs. Plans for the purchase, and distribution (if necessary), of energy for existing and planned campuses and facilities will be coordinated through the Energy Management Department.

*Systems/Equipment Purchase-* Minimum efficiency levels of each major system and equipment type shall be established by the Energy Management Department in cooperation with Construction, Maintenance and Purchasing Departments. In addition, the Energy Management Department shall assist these departments in the development of standardized specifications for energy consuming systems purchased by the district. All new equipment purchased by the district must have an energy star rating.

*Operations-* Specific operating practices of the district will be analyzed by the Energy Management Department and comments with recommendations will be provided to appropriate administrative departments and to an Energy Committee. This committee will consist of representatives from the Construction, Maintenance, Custodial and Purchasing Departments, along with representatives from the teaching staff, campus principals and district administration, and will be formed to establish enforceable rules and regulations to be followed under the energy efficiency program. This committee shall be chaired by the district Energy Manager. Decisions made by this committee will be presented to the school superintendent and board of trustees for approval and for authority to implement the specific recommendations.

After acceptance of revised operations, notice will be filed with each effected department and the revision will be integrated into normal practice. Issues such as facility comfort levels, illumination levels, operating hours (facilities and equipment), community usage, after-hours activities and any other recommendation directed toward decreased energy costs shall be produced and recommended by the Energy Department after the approval process has been completed.

*Education-* The Energy Management Department will select an energy educator responsible for the education of staff and students in the field of energy production, consumption and efficient operation. This educator will be responsible for communicating policy, distributing educational information about energy efficient operations relative to each specific campus, interpreting the success of the efficiency measures implemented, and providing the consistent stream of communication needed to keep energy efficiency as one of the major concerns of the district.

*Reporting-* The Energy Management Department shall produce monthly and annual reports providing actual consumption and energy costs for each district facility and/or campus. These reports provide comparisons of operating and cost requirements on a month-to-month and year-to-year basis. Reports depicting energy savings produced by energy efficient operations and/or renovation projects will also be provided, with success stories communicated throughout the district to increase awareness and involvement in the overall program. In addition, annual

energy audits will be conducted at each campus to determine facility additions/deletions, equipment/system operational revisions, alterations in primary facility usage, preventive maintenance revisions needed for improved operation of the aging equipment, revisions to facility inventory of energy consuming equipment, priority of equipment replacement, and any new or revised efficiency recommendations and/or practices available to each specific facility. An annual report summarizing these monthly and annual operating results and recommendations will be provided to the district trustees.

Having considered the responsibility of the district to conserve energy and to preserve our nations natural energy resources, improve the district's efficiency of operation, and eliminate unnecessary expenditures for energy, the Sheldon I.S.D. board of trustees does hereby adopt this Energy Management Policy.

### **Sensitive and Non Public Information Procedure**

**Sheldon Independent School District** adopts this policy which applies to and will help protect employees, students, parents, contractors, consultants, and the school district from damages related to loss or misuse of sensitive information. This policy will:

- Define sensitive information and related terms.
- Describe the physical security of data when it is printed on paper.
- Describe the electronic security of data when stored and distributed

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Administrators will have the responsibility to enforce this policy and ensure that it is followed.

### **POLICY**

**Definition of Sensitive Information** - Sensitive information includes the following items:

Personal Information, including but not limited to:

- Date of Birth
- Address
- Phone Numbers
- Maiden Name
- Employer Identification Number
- Bank Account Information
- Driver's License Number
- Student PEIMS Identification Number Credit Card Information, including any of the following:
  - Credit Card Number (in part or whole)
  - Credit Card Expiration Date
  - Cardholder Name
  - Cardholder Address Tax Identification Numbers, including:

- Social Security Number
- Social Insurance Number
- Business Identification Number
- Employer Identification Number Payroll information, including, among other information:
- Paychecks
- Pay Stubs
- Pay Rates

Cafeteria Plan Check Requests and associated paperwork Medical Information, including but not limited to:

- Doctor Names and Claims
- Insurance Claims
- Prescriptions
- Any related personal medical information
- Any document marked “Confidential”

If an employee is uncertain of the sensitivity of a particular piece of information, he/she should contact their supervisor/manager.

## **Distribution**

### **Hard Copy Distribution –**

**Every employee and consultant performing work for the school district will comply with the following policies:**

- File cabinets, desk drawers, overhead cabinets, and any other storage space/record retention area/offices containing documents with sensitive information will be locked when not in use.
- Common shared work areas such as desks, workstations, printers, fax machines, whiteboards, dry-erase boards, writing tablets, etc. will be cleared of all sensitive information when not in use.
- Documents waiting to be shredded will be kept in a locked area.
- Sensitive information shall be delivered in person with proper identification. When a requesting individual is unable to appear, their request must include notarized authorization.
- Sensitive documents printed to any shared printer in common areas shall be sent using a password protected secured print option.

**Electronic Distribution** - Every employee and consultant performing work for the school district will comply with the following policies:

- Internally sensitive information may not be transmitted using approved school district email. All sensitive information must be stored on a password protected device or in a secured folder.
- District and personal electronic devices that contain sensitive Sheldon ISD data must be password protected.

Example: If a device has a Sheldon ISD e-mail account on it then it will be required to be password protected.

Example: If a device such as an external hard drive or USB device contains Sheldon ISD sensitive information, it must be password protected.

- Documents containing sensitive data shall not be posted to a “cloud” data storage environment or a website. This includes, but is not limited to, Google Docs, MobileMe, and Dropbox.

### **ENFORCEMENT**

Any employee found to have violated this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **DEFINITIONS**

- **Secure Folder:** An electronic storage folder that requires authorized access and is limited to an individual or a small group.
- **Secure Network Folder:** In SISD this is a network folder that is specifically created for an individual or small group that is NOT located in areas designated as “Public”.
- **Personal Computer Folder:** A folder stored on a computer has minimal security but meets this policy criterion. Access is limited to personnel with administrator rights to the PC, which is a limited authorized group.
- **Password Protected Devices:** Any device that requires a password.