2026-2027
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

HUFFMAN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Employee Handbook/Chapter 37, Subchapter 7 Discipline Resources Receipt

Name _____

Campus/Department _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Huffman ISD Employee Handbook and Chapter 37, Subchapter 7, Discipline Resource. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

Employees have the option of receiving the handbook and Chapter 37 in electronic format or hard copy.

To access an electronic format of the handbook and Chapter 37, go to the Huffman ISD website at: www.huffmanisd.net, click on Departments/Human Resources/Resources & Helpful Links, then open 2025-2026 Employee Handbook and Education Code Chapter 37. Discipline, Law & Order.

Please indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box below:

- ❒ I choose to receive the Employee Handbook and Chapter 37, Subchapter 7 Discipline Resources in electronic format and accept responsibility for accessing it according to the instructions provided.
- ❒ I choose to receive a hard copy of the Employee Handbook and Chapter 37, Subchapter 7 Discipline Resources.

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 and the Human Resource Department of any changes in personal information such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor or the Human Resource Department if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Please sign and date your receipt in Frontline Central.

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all district policies and procedures are included. Those that are have been summarized. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to the Human Resources Department.

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

District Information

Description of the District

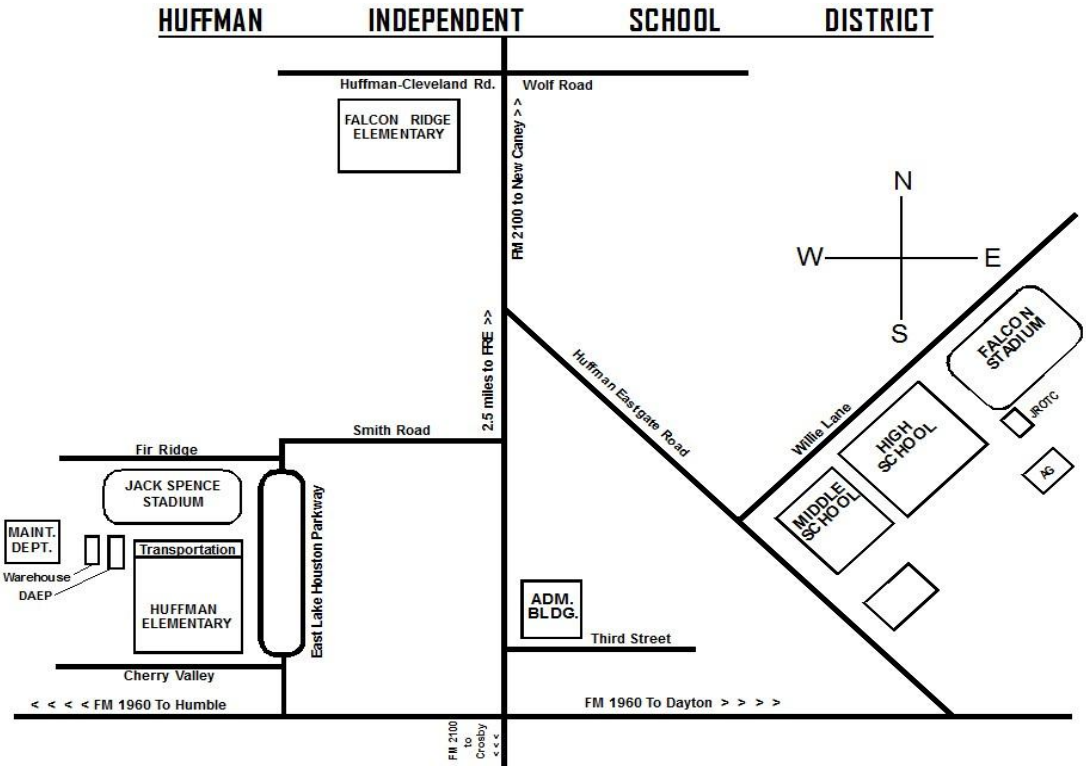
The Huffman Community

The community of Huffman is on farm roads 2100 and 1960, thirty miles northeast of Houston in the piney woods of eastern Harris County. Established in 1839, Huffman is a non-incorporated area covering 54 square miles and housing approximately over 12,000 citizens. Large amounts of Huffman are also located on the shores of beautiful Lake Houston. Huffman is a unique community comprised largely of residential subdivisions, scattered farms, apartments, and small businesses. With the addition of 99/Grand Parkway, the Huffman area is projected to grow over the next several years.

The greater percentage of the population travels to Houston, Humble, Baytown, and surrounding communities for employment. The socio-economic status of the community falls within a broad spectrum ranging from upper-middle to low-income.

Huffman Independent School District

The Huffman Independent School District is a Class 4A school district with an enrollment of over 3,600 students on four campuses; Huffman Elementary School, Falcon Ridge Elementary School, Huffman Middle School, and Hargrave High School.



Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

Policy AE

The Mission of Huffman ISD is to empower students to be responsible, life-long learners who are prepared to succeed in personal and professional life.

GOAL #1

Support and Encourage an Active Student Body and Parent/Community Involvement

GOAL #2

Provide Safe, Secure, and Student-Centered Facilities

GOAL #3

Build and Maintain Personalized Staff and Student Relationships

GOAL #4

Implement Technology to Enhance Student Performance

GOAL #5

Cultivate Responsible and Character-Strong Kids

GOAL #6

Produce and Maintain Educational Excellence with Quality Instruction & Career Connections

GOAL #7

Remain Fiscally Prudent and Effectively Manage District Resources

GOAL #8

Develop a five-year plan for developing and constructing new facilities or renovating existing facilities designed to meet the anticipated growth in student population and to support the program needs of the school district. Demographic information and projections, a review of existing facility needs, program changes initiated by the state, and other information will be incorporated in the development of the five-year plan.

BELIEFS:

Higher expectations will result in a higher success rate.

All students deserve equal educational opportunities to develop the foundation for lifelong learning.

Family, community, school, and students share responsibility in the education process.

The integration of technology is essential to the learning process.

Data driven decision making and collaborative planning facilitate student achievement and curriculum development.

The use of goal setting and problem solving strategies are critical to the development of the independent learner and decision maker.

The learning community flourishes in a safe, supportive, caring, disciplined environment where mutual respect exists.

Participation in extra-curricular activities, community service, and leadership training enhance character development and student success.

Hiring, training, and retaining quality personnel promote student achievement.

Pride, self-respect, and personal integrity are essential in building a successful lifelong learner.

Consistent application of rules and modeling respect are essential to developing a safe orderly and caring environment.

Huffman ISD
Profile of a Learner

Problem Solver
Students exercise initiative in applying proper techniques and critical thinking to creatively resolve challenges.

> *"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."*

Communicator
Students confidently exchange ideas and have opportunities to explore and develop skills in more than one language.

> *"Write to be understood, speak to be heard, read to grow."*

Perseverance
Students understand that accomplishments are often achieved by overcoming challenges through self-motivation and personal fortitude.

> *"It always seems impossible until it's done."*

Literate
Students appreciate the importance of reading, seek reading opportunities, and demonstrate effective reading skills.

> *"Literacy isn't just about reading, writing, and comprehension. It's about culture, professionalism, and social outlook."*

Digitally Prepared
Students have technological abilities and demonstrate the skills of a digital learner.

> *"Our youth have a lot of potential. We must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power towards a positive end."*

Additional traits of the HISD Learner:

Caring	Internet Safety	Respectful
Confidence	Interpersonal Skills	Self-Motivated
Extra-Curricular Involved	Knowledgeable	Socially Skilled
Fiscally Responsible	Open Minded	Thinkers
Happy	Principled	Understands Life Skills
Healthy	Reflective	Values Education
Inquirers	Resolves Conflict	Well Balanced

Huffman ISD
Profile of an Educator

Passionate
Educators exhibit a strong ambition to effectively educate all students.

Caring
Educators work with students in an empathetic, understanding way and take a genuine interest in each child's individual needs.

Competent & Knowledgeable
Educators possess deep knowledge and understanding of their subject matter/grade level content, seek ongoing relevant professional development opportunities, and utilize research-based best practices in instructional delivery.

Dedicated
Educators meet all instructional and professional expectations of the district and go above and beyond minimum expectations to ensure that student learning needs are met.

Effective Communicator
Educators convey ideas and information in a positive and effective way with all stakeholders, including students, parents, and colleagues.

Team Player
Educators collaborate and work collectively with all stakeholders.

Engaged
Educators commit to building relationships with students, faculty, parents, and the community.

Motivator
Educators incite students to reach their full potential inside and outside the classroom.

Models Ethical Behavior & Professionalism
Educators display a high standard of morality, confidentiality, and professionalism in their personal and professional lives and maintain a professional appearance while performing district duties.

Perseverance
Educators model and demonstrate the ability to overcome challenges through self-motivation and personal fortitude.

Technologically Competent
Educators possess and utilize technology skills to enhance instruction and communication in a way that benefits all members of the learning community.

www.huffmanisd.net

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. Trustees are elected biannually and serve four-year terms. Trustees serve without compensation, must be registered voters, and must reside in the district.

2026-2027 Huffman ISD Board of Trustees

Jared Dagley, Member	Position #1
Dean Warren, Member	Position #2
Ray Burt, Member	Position #3
Patrick Terry, Secretary	Position #4
Julie Sullivan, Assistant Secretary	Position #5
Layla Karasek, President	Position #6
Sam Pier, Vice President	Position #7

The board usually meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 pm at the Huffman ISD Administration Building, 24302 FM 2100 in Huffman. In the event that large attendance is anticipated, the board may meet at another location determined in advance and announced to the public. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and at the administration building at least three business days before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

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

Board Meeting Schedule for 2026-2027

July 27	August 24	September 28	October 26
November 16	December 14	January 21	February 22
March 15	April 26	May 24	June 28

Huffman ISD Administrators

Superintendent
Dr. Angeles Perez

Chief Financial Officer
Ginger Ramer

Chief Operations Officer
Dr. Adam Skinner

Executive Director of Human Resources
Kristen Bailey

Communications Director
Mandy Fortenberry

Hargrave High School Principal	Chandler Simpson
Huffman Middle School Principal	Dr. Marybel Ruiz
Falcon Ridge Elementary Principal	Autumn Jackson
Huffman Elementary Principal	Angie LeVier
Athletic Director	Joey Buchta
DAEP Director	Dante Godine
Facilities and Risk Management Director	Glenn Turner
Finance Director	Danielle Rankin
Food Service Director	Simone Orjiako
Mental Health/Student Wellness Director	Monica Oncale
Special Education Director	Michelle Morrison
Technology Director	Amy Davis
Transportation Director	LaTedra Bailey
Coordinator of Assessment, Accountability, and Compliance	Ashlee Boothe
Coordinator of Teaching and Learning	Rhonda Schwer
PEIMS Coordinator	Monica Galvan
Special Education Coordinator	Melody Lemmonds

HUFFMAN ISD

2026-2027 DISTRICT CALENDAR FOR EMPLOYEES

2026

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

September '26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	X	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 '26						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	X	X]	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	[19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	X	31

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

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

2027

January '27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	X	[5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	X	16
17	18	X	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

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

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

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

May '27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	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	X]	28	29
30	31					

June '27						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	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			

August/Sept

3-11	PD Work Days
12	1st Day of School
Sept 7	Labor Day Holiday

October

9	End of 1st 9 Weeks
9	Elementary PD
12-16	Fall Break
30	Parent/Teacher Conferences

November

23-27	Thanksgiving Break

December

18	End of 2nd 9 weeks / Half Day
21-Jan 1	Christmas Break

January

4	PD Work Day
18	MLK Holiday

February

8-12	February Break
15	Parent/Teacher Conferences

March/Apr

19	End of 3rd 9 weeks
22-26	Spring Break
29	Elementary PD

May

27	Last Day of School
28	PD/Work Day
31	Memorial Day

- School Closed/Holiday
- Early Release
- New Teacher In-Service
- Bad Weather Days
- Parent/Teacher Conf.
- Camp Work Day (No School)
- Teacher In-Service Day (No School)
- State Testing Days
- [ ] Beginning / Ending Grading Period
- Elementary PD Day (No School for ES students)
- X BLACKOUT DAY

Days 1st Semester
81 Secondary/ 80 Elementary
Days 2nd Semester
92 Secondary/ 91 Elementary
Teacher In-Service
11 Secondary/13 Elementary

Adopted by the Board, 12/15/25

Helpful Contacts

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

School Directory

Huffman ISD Administration
24302 FM 2100, PO Box 2390
Huffman, TX 77336
Phone: 281-324-1871
Fax: 281-324-4319

Executive Team

Dr. Angeles Perez	Superintendent
Ginger Ramer	Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Adam Skinner	Chief Operating Officer
Kristen Bailey	Ex. Director of Human Resources
Amanda Fortenberry	Communications Director

Willie J. Hargrave High School
25400 Willy Lane
Huffman, TX 77336
Phone: 281-324-1845
Fax: 281-324-3368

Chandler Simpson	Principal
Dr. Charles Bardwell	Assistant Principal
Aaron Field	Assistant Principal
Savannah Zinter	Assistant Principal

Huffman Middle School
3407 Huffman Eastgate Rd
Huffman, TX 77336
Phone: 281-324-2598
Fax: 281-324-2710

Dr. Marybel Ruiz	Principal
Kaylee Jackson	Assistant Principal
Amy Nevil	Assistant Principal

Falcon Ridge Elementary School
26503 FM 2100
Huffman, TX 77336
Phone: 281-324-7100
Fax: 281-324-2076

Autumn Jackson	Principal
Keely Barr	Assistant Principal
Summer White	Assistant Principal

Huffman Elementary School
24403 East Lake Houston Pkwy
Huffman, TX 77336
Phone: 281-324-1399
Fax: 281-324-1646

Angie LeVier	Principal
Tasha Bennett	Assistant Principal
Kimmy Winslow	Assistant Principal

Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity

Policies DAA, DIA

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

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

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the Title IX coordinator for employees to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment: Kristen Bailey, Executive Director of Human Resources, 24302 FM 2100, kbailey@huffmanisd.net, 281-324-7601. Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, email, or phone. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator for employees for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: Kristen Bailey, Executive Director of Human Resources, 24302 FM 2100, kbailey@huffmanisd.net, 281-324-7601.

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

Job Vacancy Announcements

Policy DC

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the district's website.

Employment After Retirement

Policy DC

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

Contract and Noncontract Employment

Policy DC series

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

Probationary Contracts. Nurses and full-time 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 at least a two-year lapse in district employment may also be employed by a probationary contract. Probationary contracts are one-year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district may not exceed one school year.

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

Term Contracts. Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification and nurses will be employed by term contracts after they have successfully completed the probationary period. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract. 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 not employed by contract unless determined by Board policy. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

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

Policy DBA, DF

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

A certified employee's contract may be voided without Chapter 21 due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact Human Resources if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

Recertification of Employment Authorization

Policy DC

At the time of hiring 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 Resource Department at 281-324-7601 if you have any questions regarding reverification of employment authorization. Failure to verify employment authorization may result in termination.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

Policy DHE

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

employee's personal items, and work areas including district-owned technology resources, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work sites used in district business. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may result if an employee refuses to submit to testing or is found to violate district policy.

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

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug testing policies and related educational material should contact the Human Resource Department at 281-324-7601.

Health Safety Training

Policies DBA, DMA

District employees who are head directors of a marching band or head coaches or chief sponsors of an extracurricular athletic activity (including cheerleading) that is sponsored or sanctioned by the district or UIL must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another authorized organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to Human Resources by September 1, 2026.

Nurses, athletic coaches or sponsors, PE teachers, marching band directors, cheerleading coaches, and other certain employees must obtain and maintain certification in the principles and techniques of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) provided by the American Red Cross, The American Heart Association, or another authorized organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to Human Resources by September 1, 2026.

School nurses and employees with regular contact with students must complete a Texas Education Agency approved, Online training regarding seizure disorder aware-ness, 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).

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. A teacher requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit his or her request by March 12, 2027. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Human Resource Department and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

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.

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 must be compensated for overtime

and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. (See *Overtime Copensation* page 26)

ADA Accommodations

The district will provide reasonable accommodations to employees with a disability if the accommodation would allow the individual to perform the essential functions of their job, unless doing so would create an undue hardship. An employee or their supervisor may initiate a request for accommodation by contacting the Human Resource Department and identifying an adjustment or change at work that is needed because of a disability. An employee may also submit a written request to HR using the ADA Accommodation Request Form, which is available on request.

Upon receiving the reasonable accommodation request, HR or the ADA coordinator will meet with the employee and conduct an informal, interactive discussion to identify accommodation(s) that will allow the employee to perform the essential functions of the job effectively. The district may request medical information concerning the employee's disability to assist in determining what accommodation(s) may be available and appropriate. The employee will be responsible for obtaining the information from their health care provider. Medical information received will be confidential and kept separate from the employee's personnel file.

After meeting with the employee and reviewing medical documentation, HR or the ADA coordinator will determine whether the employee is a qualified individual with a disability and develop a reasonable accommodation plan for the employee. Accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis. HR or the ADA coordinator will work closely with the employee and supervisor to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided and effective.

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 up to one year after the birth of a child. A place, other than a multiple-user bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from other employees and the public, where employees can express breast milk will be provided.

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

The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections of Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP Act) requires an employee to notify the district if they believe the district is out of compliance in providing breaks for a nursing mother. The employee must give the district 10 days to come into compliance

before making any claim of liability against the district. An employee with concerns should contact Kristen Bailey, Executive Director of Human Resources, at 281-324-7601.

Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) provides consideration of accommodations to employees who know limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. An employee seeking PWFA accommodation should contact Kristen Bailey, Executive Director of Human Resources, 281-324-7601 to begin the interactive process.

Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications

Policies DK, DBA

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

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to an uncertified substitute, inappropriately certified teacher, or an uncertified educator. 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, including subsitutes. 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 Resource Department.

Outside Employment and Tutoring

Policy DBD

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

Administrators. An employee who has significant administrative duties relating to the operation of a school district, including the operation for a campus, program, or other subdivision of the district, is restricted from outside employment. Administrators may not receive financial benefits for performing personal services for any business entity that conducts or solicits business with the district.

Administrators are also prohibited from receiving financial benefits for performing personal services for any education business that provides services regarding the curriculum or

administration of any school district or financial benefits for performing personal services for other school districts, open enrollment charter schools, and education service centers. An exception applies to an administrator who is not a superintendent, assistant superintendent, or member of a board of managers if the board approves as required by statute. Services must be performed on the administrator's personal time. Contact the Executive Director of Human Resources for more information.

Performance Evaluation

Policy DN

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 can also be used to document performance information. All employees will receive a copy of their written evaluation, participate in a performance conference with their supervisor, and have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

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

Employee Involvement

Policies BQA, BQB

At both the campus and district levels, Huffman 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 Administration Building.

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.

Mental Health Training

Policy DMA

All district employees who regularly interact with students are required to complete an evidence-based mental health training program that is designed to provide instruction regarding the recognition and support of children and youth who experience mental health or substance use issues that may pose a threat to school safety. Employees must provide a certificate of completion to the district that includes the name of the training course, along with supporting documentation confirming that the training meets the requirements of the commissioner's rules for mental health training.

Campus staff are required to complete the training includes, but is not limited to, teachers, coaches, librarians, instructional coaches, administrators, administrative support personnel, school resource officers, paraprofessionals, substitutes, custodians, cafeteria staff, bus drivers, crossing guards, and district special program liaisons, and supervisors of personnel who regularly interact with students.

Compensation and Benefits

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as non-exempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See *Overtime Compensation*, page 27)

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

Employees should contact the Human Resource Department for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

Annualized Compensation

Policy DEA

The district pays all salaried employees over 12 months regardless of the number of months employed during the school year. Salaried employees will be paid in equal monthly or bimonthly payments, beginning with the first pay period of the school year. Employees who separate after the last day of instruction will continue to receive paychecks through the end of the summer. In the event of an overpayment, the district will deduct any overpayments from one or more of your paychecks.

Paychecks

All employees are paid semi-monthly. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization. Employees will receive an email notification to view their direct deposit statement online, or they can log into Munis Self-Service. Employees are responsible for regularly reviewing the accuracy of their pay statements and should contact the payroll department if they have any questions.

26-27 Employee Pay Dates

Employee Pay Schedule
2026-2027

Pay Period	Payday
8/3 - 8/23**	11-Sep
8/24 - 9/13**	25-Sep
9/14 - 9/27	9-Oct
9/28 - 10/11	26-Oct
10/12 - 10/25	10-Nov
10/26 - 11/15**	25-Nov
11/16 - 11/29	11-Dec
11/30 - 12/13	18-Dec
12/14 - 12/27	11-Jan
12/28 - 1/10	26-Jan
1/11 - 1/31**	11-Feb
2/1 - 2/14	26-Feb
2/15 - 2/28	11-Mar
3/1 - 3/14	26-Mar
3/15 - 3/28	9-Apr
3/29 - 4/11	26-Apr
4/12 - 4/25	11-May
4/26 - 5/9	26-May
5/10 - 5/30**	11-Jun
5/31 - 6/13	25-Jun
6/14 - 6/27	9-Jul
6/28 - 7/11	26-Jul
7/12 - 7/25	11-Aug
7/26 - 8/1	26-Aug

** Notes 3 week period

Automatic Payroll Deposit

Employees will have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of two weeks prior to the payment date is necessary to activate this service. Employees without a bank account will be required to fill out a pay card application. Contact the Payroll department at extension 7632 for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Payroll Deductions

Policy CFEA

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

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

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

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

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

Overtime Compensation

Policy DEA

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

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:00 am Monday and ends at 11:59 pm Sunday.

Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for the hours set by the normal work schedule. Hours worked beyond the normal schedule up to 40 hours will be paid at a regular rate of pay.

Employees may be compensated for overtime (i.e., hours beyond 40 in a workweek) at a time-and-a-half rate.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

Policy DEE

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor and the appropriate central office administrator must give approval. For approved travel, District employees who drive a personally owned or leased vehicle in their duties or for other school business travel will be reimbursed mileage on a per-mile basis and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by the district.

Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

Policy CRD

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

- Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
- Employees who are not contributing TRS members and who are employed for 10 or more regularly scheduled hours per week

TRS retirees who are enrolled in TRS-Care (retiree health insurance program) are not eligible to participate in TRS-ActiveCare.

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). Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact the Benefits Department at extension 7600 for more information.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for Dental, Vision, Disability, Cancer, Heart, Life or Long Term Care. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Benefits Department at extension 7600 for more information.

Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

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

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

Workers' Compensation Insurance

Policy CRE

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from TASB Risk Management Fund, effective July 2025.

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 Human Resources Department. 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 38, 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 the Payroll Department and TRS as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (www.trs.texas.gov). See page 14 for information on restrictions for the employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

Other Benefit Programs

- Tuition-free attendance for children of nonresident employees, grades K-12
- Tuition-based Pre-Kindergarten, free for teachers (087 PEIMS code)
- Catastrophic sick leave pool
- Employee Assistance Program
- Free athletic admission, with district ID, to home games

Leaves and Absences

Policies DEC, DECA, DECB

The district offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence. Employees who expect to be absent for an extended period of more than five days should call the Human Resources Department for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums, and requirements for communicating with the district.

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

- Non-duty, if applicable
- Local
- State

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

If an hourly employee does not report or request leave of absence(s) according to district procedures, the incident is considered a "no call/no show". An employee who is absent for 2 consecutive days without notice is considered to have abandoned their job and may face disciplinary consequences up to and including termination.

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

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

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

Medical Certification. Any employee who is absent more than 3 days because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider

confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and—in the case of personal illness—the employee's fitness to return to work.

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

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

Continuation of Health Insurance. Employees on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under FMLA will be paid by the district as they were prior to the leave. Otherwise, the district does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave.

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 personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts, and generally transfers to education service centers. Personal leave may be used for two general purposes: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

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

Discretionary. Leave taken at an employee's discretion, which 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 three days 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. The work calendar reflects blackout days to maximize instructional and staff development time. Absences will only be approved for extenuating circumstances by the principal or supervisor, and will be on a case-by-case basis.

Blackout dates. Absences will only be approved for extenuating circumstances by campus and/or department supervisors. In the event an absence is not approved, the employee will take "leave without pay" unless a doctor's note is provided.

August 12	September 4, 8	October 9, 19, 30	November 20, 30
December 18	January 4, 15, 19	February 5, 15	March 19, 29
May 27			

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 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 regularly employed people shall earn a maximum of five workdays of local leave per school year, at the same rate as state personal leave.

Local leave shall and shall be taken with no loss of pay. Employees who are employed full-time for 10 years or more will be paid out their local days, up to 60 days once they leave the district.

Local leave shall be used under the terms and conditions applicable to state sick leave accumulated prior to the 1995-96 school year, except as provided below. [See DEC (LEGAL)]

An employee who has exhausted state personal leave and state sick leave accumulated prior to May 30, 1995, shall be permitted to use up to two days of accumulated local sick leave for emergency leave in the event of destruction of residence or loss or damage to furniture and

fixtures due to flood, fire, or storm, or for other family emergencies involving the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family. The employee shall notify and request approval from the principal or department head as soon as reasonably possible.

Non-Duty Days

Each employee in a position requiring 223 days or more of service shall receive non-duty days per school year. A "non-duty" day shall be defined as the total number of workdays in the district calendar less the employee's contracted or assigned number of workdays. Use of non-duty days shall be subject to the approval of the employee's immediate supervisor.

Non-duty days shall be taken during the school year accrued. Exempt staff should use their days by June 30th or have a plan to use them no later than July 31st. Any remaining days will be forfeited. Non-exempt staff must use their days or have a plan by June 30th of each year. Any remaining days will be paid out at the regular daily rate on the 2nd pay cycle in July. Non-duty days shall be forfeited upon separation or termination from the district.

Any non-duty days accrued before June 30, 2024, will be grandfathered and not subject to the above guidelines. Unused days will be paid upon voluntary separation at the June 30, 2024, rate.

Sick Leave Bank (or Pool)

Administration

The sick leave pool is a benefit to assist employees in dealing with prolonged, severe or life-threatening conditions that force them to exhaust paid leave and would otherwise result in a loss of income. The sick leave pool program allows employees to voluntarily donate accrued local leave days to another employee. The Superintendent/designee will administer the sick leave pool program and is responsible for receiving and granting requests and processing donation of sick leave pool days. Employees that wish to appeal the decision of the sick leave administrator must follow the employee grievance policy outlined in Policy DGBA.

Eligibility and Donations

All regular employees are eligible to request establishment of a sick leave pool. For purposes of the sick leave pool program, regular employee is defined as an employee who is required to work more than four and one-half months each fiscal year. Days donated and used by employees will be prorated according to their regular work schedules.

An employee with a catastrophic illness may request a sick leave pool be created after all other available leave days are exhausted. An employee must exhaust all other available leave days, compensatory time, and non-duty days before applying for sick leave pool days.

Individuals may donate 3 day(s) per school year to any one employee. A signed statement indicating the number of accrued days the employee wishes to donate to the pool must be

submitted to payroll. All donations must be made in day increment(s). The donation of leave to a sick leave pool is voluntary on the part of the donor. Employees may not solicit fellow employees for donations. Donated days pledged to the pool are not available for use by the donor. Days pledged but not used by the recipient will be returned to donors on a prorated basis when the pool ceases to exist because there is no longer a need.

Only absences due to the employee's catastrophic illness or injury are covered by the sick leave pool. A catastrophic illness or injury usually occurs suddenly and without warning. Injuries or illnesses that are considered catastrophic, due to the enormous impact they have on the lives of individuals who experience them, require the services of a licensed medical practitioner for a prolonged period of time. Such events as a brain injury, a spinal cord injury, accidental amputation, severe burns, and a malignancy that requires extensive surgery, ongoing radiation, and/or chemotherapy, multiple fractures, or neurological disorders are examples of injuries or illnesses described as catastrophic.

Additionally, the long-term needs of someone who has experienced a catastrophic injury far surpass those of individuals with less severe illnesses or injuries. Some individuals may recover from catastrophic illnesses or injuries if they receive proper, early medical treatment, while others experience significant suffering, a reduction in their life span, and/or experience a permanent disability.

Therefore, normal pregnancies and deliveries, caesarean deliveries without complications, and hysterectomies without extended hospital stays as well as routine/and or elective surgeries without complications, are not considered to be a catastrophic illness or condition. The following conditions are excluded:

- Pre-existing condition diagnosis and/or treatment for the previous three months period preceeding application for the pool
- Normal pregnancy and/or post natal care
- Mental disability diagnosis or treatment
- Elective or routine surgery
- Worker's compensation eligibility for indemnity temporary/impairment income benefits
- Stress related illness
- Injuries resulting from or while the employee is intoxicated or under the influence of any controlled substance unless it has been administered on the advice of a physician and/or prescription of a physician and has not been voluntarily misused or abused.

Such conditions typically require in-patient hospitalization or are expected to result in disability or death.

Requests for Sick Leave Pool Days

An employee must submit a written request for sick leave pool days to the Human Resources office. A request must be made on the form provided by the district after all leave is exhausted. The administrator will notify the employee in writing regarding approval or denial of the request. Employees may be granted up to the maximum number of days contributed to the pool, not to

exceed 30 sick leave pool days for any one condition. Any medical information provided shall remain confidential. The names of all donors will remain confidential.

Certification

Medical certification by a health care provider as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act must be submitted with a request for sick leave pool days before the pool will be approved. The district reserves the right to require recertification of a medical condition before the pool will be approved. The district reserves the right to request a second opinion to certify the need for leave by a health care provider designated by the district. The district will assume the cost if a second opinion is required.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—General Provisions

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

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

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

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

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

You have the right to use FMLA leave in one block of time. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, you may take FMLA leave intermittently in separate blocks of time, or on a reduced schedule by working less hours each day or week. Read Fact Sheet #28M(c) for more information.

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

Am I eligible to take FMLA leave?

You are an eligible employee if all of the following apply:
• You work for a covered employer,
• You have worked for your employer at least 12 months,
• You have at least 1,250 hours of service for your employer during the 12 months before your leave, and
• Your employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of your work location

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

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

How do I request FMLA leave?

Generally, to request FMLA leave, you must:
• Follow your employer's normal policies for requesting leave,
• Give notice at least 30 days before your need for FMLA leave, or
• If advance notice is not possible, give notice as soon as possible.

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

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

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

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

What does my employer need to do?

If you are eligible for FMLA leave, your employer must:
• Allow you to take job-protected time off work for a qualifying reason,

• Continue your group health plan coverage while you are on leave on the same basis as if you had not taken leave, and

• Allow you to return to the same job, or a virtually identical job with the same pay, benefits and other working conditions, including shift and location, at the end of your leave.

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

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

• About your FMLA rights and responsibilities, and

• How much of your requested leave, if any, will be FMLA-protected leave?

Where can I find more information?

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

If you believe your rights under the FMLA have been violated, you may file a complaint with WHD or file a private lawsuit against your employer in court.

Local Procedures for Implementing Family and Medical Leave Provisions

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period from July 1 through June 30

Use of Paid Leave. FML runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, compensatory time, assault leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The district will designate the leave as FML, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently. Teachers have the option of not using paid leave during an FML absence for pregnancy or birth, or adoption of a child.

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

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

Fitness for Duty. An employee who takes FML due to the employee's own serious health condition shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification from the health care provider. When leave is taken for the employee's own serious health condition, the certification must address the employee's ability to perform essential job functions. The district

shall provide a list of essential job functions (e.g., job description) to the employee with the FML designation notice to share with the health care provider. Fitness for duty is not required when an employee returns to work following leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition; to care for a child following birth, adoption, or foster care placement; or for qualifying exigency leave.

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

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

Failure to Return. If, at the expiration of FML, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the district may require the employee to reimburse the district's share of insurance premiums paid during any portion of FML when the employee was on unpaid leave. If the employee fails to return to work for a reason beyond the employee's control, such as a continuing personal or family serious health condition or a spouse being unexpectedly transferred more than 75 miles from the district, the district may not require the employee to reimburse the district's share of premiums paid.

District Contact. Employees who require FML or have questions should contact 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. Teachers employed under District of Innovation are excluded from Temporary Disability Leave.

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

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

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

Workers' Compensation Benefits

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

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

Assault Leave

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An inceident involving an assault is a work-related injury, and should be immediately reported to the Human Resource Department. An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person nonresponsible for purposes of criminal liability.

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

Bereavement Leave

Use of state leave and/or local leave for death in the immediate family shall not exceed five workdays per occurrence, subject to the approval of the District.

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 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 will 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 paid 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 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 state military duty (National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed in the position they would have held if employment had not been interrupted or reassigned to an equivalent or similar position, provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. Employees returning to work following military leave should contact the Human Resource Department. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years.

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

Mental Health Leave for Peace Officers and Licensed Telecommunicators
A District peace officer who experiences a traumatic event in the scope of employment shall be granted a maximum of ten days of mental health leave per traumatic event. Such leave shall be provided in accordance with administrative regulations and shall not be deducted from the employee's pay or leave balance.

The Superintendent shall develop regulations regarding mental health leave that address the following:

1. Circumstances or reasons under which a peace officer may use mental health leave;
2. Procedures for requesting mental health leave and maintaining the anonymity of the requester;
3. The administrator authorized to approve requests for mental health leave; and
4. Other procedures deemed necessary for administering this provision.

Quarantine Leave for Peace Officers

A District peace officer shall be granted quarantine leave when ordered by the local health authority or the peace officer's supervisor to quarantine or isolate due to possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty. Such leave shall be provided in accordance with administrative regulations and shall not be deducted from the employee's pay or leave balance.

The Superintendent shall develop regulations regarding quarantine leave that address the following:

1. Continuation of all employment benefits and compensation for the duration of the leave;
2. Reimbursement for reasonable costs related to the quarantine; and
3. Other procedures deemed necessary for administering this provision.

FMLA leave shall run concurrently with applicable paid leave and compensatory time, as applicable.

Leave for Police Officers for Illness or Injury

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

If unable to return to work at the end of the paid leave and any extension, a police officer may use accumulated sick, vacation, and other accrued leave before being placed on unpaid temporary leave. At the end of temporary leave, the police officer will be reinstated at the same rank and with the same seniority the person had before going on temporary leave.

Employee Relations and Communications

Employee Recognition and Appreciation

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities also include teacher of the year awards, STAR Awards, and Galaxy Awards.

District Communications

Throughout the school year, the Superintendent, along with campuses and departments, will publish newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

Complaints and Grievances

Policy DGBA

In an effort to hear and resolve employee concerns or complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted an orderly grievance process. Employees are encouraged to discuss their concerns or complaints with their supervisors or an appropriate administrator at any time.

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

PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS — DGBA
EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES — (LOCAL)

COMPLAINTS

In this policy, the terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning.

OTHER COMPLAINT PROCESSES

Employee complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as provided below:

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

NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES

The District shall inform employees of this policy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Board encourages employees to discuss their concerns and

INFORMAL PROCESS	complaints through informal conferences with their supervisor, principal, or other appropriate administrator. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.
DIRECT COMMUNICTION WITH BOARD MEMBERS	Employees shall not be prohibited from communicating with a member of the Board regarding District operations except when communication between an employee and a Board member would be inappropriate because of a pending hearing or appeal related to the employee.
FORMAL PROCESS	If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the employee, he or she may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form. Even after initiating the formal complaint process, employees are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. An employee whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time. The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or "mini-trial" at any level.
NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES	The District shall inform employees of this policy.
FREEDOM FROM RETALIATION	Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against an employee for bringing a concern or complaint.
WHISTLEBLOWER COMPLAINTS	Whistleblower complaints shall be filed within the time specified by law and may be made to the Superintendent or designee beginning at Level Two. Time lines for the employee and the District set out in this policy may be shortened to allow the Board to make a final decision within 60 calendar days of the initiation of the complaint. [See DG]
COMPLAINTS AGAINST SUPERVISORS	Complaints alleging a violation of law by a supervisor may be made to the Superintendent or designee. Complaints alleging a violation of law by the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board or designee.
COMPLAINTS	In this policy, the terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning. This policy shall apply to all employee complaints, except as provided below.
EXCEPTIONS	This policy shall not apply to: 8. Complaints alleging discrimination, including violations of Title IX (gender), Title VII (sex, race, color, religion, national origin), ADEA (age), or Section 504 (disability). [See DIA]

9. Complaints alleging certain forms of harassment, including harassment by a supervisor and violations of Title VII. [See DIA]

10. Complaints concerning retaliation relating to discrimination and harassment. [See DIA]

11. Complaints concerning instructional materials. [See EFA]

12. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District. [See CKE]

13. Complaints arising from the proposed nonrenewal of a term contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Education Code. [See DFBB]

14. Complaints arising from the proposed termination or suspension without pay of an employee on a probationary, term, or continuing contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Education Code during the contract term. [See DFAA, DFBA, or DFCA, respectively]

GENERAL PROVISIONS

FILING

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

RESPONSE

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

DAYS

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

REPRESENTATIVE

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

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

CONSOLIDATING COMPLAINTS

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

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

UNTIMELY FILINGS

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

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

COSTS INCURRED

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

COMPLAINT FORM

Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District.

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

A complaint form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be refilled with all the required information if the refilling is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

AUDIO RECORDING

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

LEVEL ONE

Complaint forms must be filed:

1. Within 15 days of the date the employee first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and

2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem.

   In most circumstances, employees on a school campus shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal; other District employees shall file Level One complaints with their immediate

supervisor.

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

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

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

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

LEVEL TWO

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

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

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

The Level One record shall include:

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

The Superintendent or designee shall hold a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues presented by the employee at Level One and identified in the Level Two appeal notice. At the conference, the employee may provide information concerning any documents or information relied

upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The Superintendent or designee may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

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

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

LEVEL THREE

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

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

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

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

The Level Two record shall include:

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

If at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the employee notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.

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

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

explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

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

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

Employee Conduct and Welfare

Standards of Conduct

Policy DH

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

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

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines, including intentionally make a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC by the superintendent knew of the incident. See *Reports to the Texas Education Agency,* Page 93 for additional information.

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

Texas Educators' Code of Ethics

Purpose and Scope

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

Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification. (19 TAC 247.1(b))

Enforceable Standards

1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

Standard 1.1 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and its certification process.
Standard 1.2 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly or recklessly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.
Standard 1.3 The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.
Standard 1.4 The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.
Standard 1.5 The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.
Standard 1.6 The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.
Standard 1.7 The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.
Standard 1.8 The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.
Standard 1.9 The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.
Standard 1.10 The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.
Standard 1.11 The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly 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.
Standard 2.8 The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly subject a colleague to sexual harassment.

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

Standard 3.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
Standard 3.2 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.
Standard 3.3 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.
Standard 3.4 The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.
Standard 3.5 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.
Standard 3.6 The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student.
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:

1. the nature, purpose, timing and amount of the communication;
2. the subject matter of the communication;
3. whether the communication was made openly, or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
4. whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
5. whether the communication was sexually explicit;
6. whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness of the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Policies DH, DIA

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees, unpaid interns, student teachers, or students. While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment of other persons including board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. A substantiated charge of harassment will result in disciplinary action up to and including terminiation.

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

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

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

Note: This policy addresses discrimination, harassment and retaliation involving District employees. In this policy, the term "employees" includes former employees and applicants for employment. For discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving students, see FFH. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

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

DISCRIMINATION

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

HARASSMENT

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

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

EXAMPLES

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

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination defined as unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually

motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

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

EXAMPLES

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

RETALIATION

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

An employee who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding harassment or discrimination is subject to appropriate discipline.

EXAMPLES

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

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

In this policy, the term "prohibited conduct" includes discrimination, harassment, and retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

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

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

DEFINITION OF DISTRICT OFFICALS

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

TITLE IX COORDINATOR

Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Title IX coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as

amended:

Name: Kristen Bailey

Position: Executive Director of Human Resources

Address: 24302 FM 2100, Huffman, Texas 77336

Telephone: (281) 324-1871

ADA / SECTION 504 COORDINATOR

Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the ADA/Section 504 coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended:

Name: Kristen Bailey

Position: Executive Director of Human Resources

Address: 24302 FM 2100, Huffman, Texas 77336

Telephone: (281) 324-1871

SUPERINTENDENT

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

ALTERNATIVE REPORTING PROCEDURES

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

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

TIMELY REPORTING

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

NOTICE OF REPORT

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

INVESTIGATION OF THE REPORT

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

Upon receipt or notice of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the District official shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation,

regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending.

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

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

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

CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION

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

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

DISTRICT ACTION

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

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

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

APPEAL

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

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

RECORDS RETENTION

Copies of reports alleging prohibited conduct, investigation reports, and related records shall be maintained by the District for a period of at least three years. [See CPC]

ACCESS TO POLICY

This policy shall be distributed annually to District employees. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and

the District administrative offices.

Harassment of Students

Policies DF, DH, FFG, FFH, FFI

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees is a form of discrimination and is 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 groupu of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harrassment, or 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 73 and *Bullying,* page 96, for additional information.

Procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students are listed below: FFH (local)

Definition
"Solicitation of a romantic relationship" means deliberate or repeated acts that can be reasonably interpreted as soliciting a relationship characterized by an ardent emotional attachment or pattern of exclusivity. Acts that constitute the solicitation of a romantic relationship include:

1. Behavior, gestures, expressions, communications, or a pattern of communication with a student that is unrelated to the educator's job duties and that may reasonably be interpreted as encouraging the student to form an ardent or exclusive emotional attachment to the educator, including statements of love, affection, or attraction. When evaluating whether communications constitute the solicitation of a romantic relationship, the following may be considered:
    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 to which the educator attempted to conceal the communications;
    f. If the educator claims to be counseling a student, TEA staff 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 law enforcement agencies; and
    g. Any other communications tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with a student.
2. Making inappropriate comments about a student's body.
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.
7. Engaging in conversations regarding the sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party.
8. Inappropriate hugging, kissing, or excessive touching.
9. Suggestions that a romantic relationship is desired after the student graduates, including post-graduation plans for dating or marriage.
10. Any other acts tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with the student, including providing the student with drugs or alcohol.

STUDENT WELFARE — FFH
FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION — (LOCAL)

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

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The district prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. The District prohibits dating violence, as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination against a student is defined as conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or on any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the student.

PROHIBITED HARASSMENT

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

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;

2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or

3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Prohibited harassment includes dating violence as defined by this policy.

EXAMPLES

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

SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY AN EMPLOYEE

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

1. A District employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or

2. The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

   a. Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities; or

   b. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

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

BY OTHERS

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

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive

educational environment;

2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or

3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

EXAMPLES

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

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

GENDER-BASED HARRASSMENT

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

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;

2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or

3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities

EXAMPLES

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

DATING VIOLENCE

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

marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense.

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

4. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

5. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or

6. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

EXAMPLES

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

RETALIATION

The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, or another student who, in good faith, makes a report of harassment or discrimination, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.

EXAMPLES

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

FALSE CLAIM

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

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

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another student has

STUDENT REPORT

experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, other District employee, or the appropriate District official listed in this policy.

EMPLOYEE REPORT

Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed in this policy and take any other steps required by this policy.

DEFINITION OF DISTRICT OFFICIALS

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

TITLE IX COORDINATOR

Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Title IX coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:

Name: Michaelene Morrison

Position: Director of Special Services

Address: 24302 FM 2100, Huffman, Texas 77336

Telephone: (281) 324-1871

ADA / SECTION 504 COORDINATOR

Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the ADA/Section 504 coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended:

Name: Michaelene Morrison

Position: Director of Special Services

Address: 24302 FM 2100, Huffman, Texas 77336

Telephone: (281) 324-1871

SUPERINTENDENT

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

ALTERNATIVE REPORTING PROCEDURES

A student shall not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX coordinator or ADA/Section 504 coordinator, may be directed to the Superintendent

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

investigation.

TIMELY REPORTING

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

NOTICE TO PARENTS

The District official or designee shall promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct by a District employee or another adult.

INVESTIGATION OF THE REPORT

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

Upon receipt or notice of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the District official shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation, regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending. If not, the District official shall refer to the complaint for consideration under FFI.

If an investigation is required in accordance with this policy, the District official shall also determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by FFI.

If appropriate, the District shall promptly take interim action calculated to address prohibited conduct or bullying during the course of the investigation.

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

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

CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION

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

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

investigation.

DISTRICT ACTION PROHIBITED CONDUCT	If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.
CORRECTIVE ACTION	Examples of corrective action may include a training program for those involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, counseling to the victim and the student who engaged in prohibited conduct, follow-up inquiries to determine if any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where harassment has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against discrimination and harassment.
BULLYING	If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, as defined by FFI, the District official shall refer to FFI for appropriate notice to parents and District action. The District official shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.
IMPROPER CONDUCT	If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or other corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.
CONFIDENTIALITY	To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.
APPEAL	A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG (LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level. A student shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.
RECORDS RETENTION	Retention of records shall be in accordance with FB (LOCAL) and CPC (LOCAL).
ACCESS TO POLICY	Information regarding this policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's Web site, to the extent practicable, and readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

Note: For a detailed treatment of termination and nonrenewal of educator contracts, see policies DFAA and DFAB (Probationary Contracts), DFBA and DFBB (Term Contracts), and DFCA (Continuing Contracts).

WITHHOLDING INFORMATION

An attempt by any District employee to encourage or coerce a child to withhold information from the child's parent is grounds for discharge or suspension under Education Code 21.104 (probationary contracts), 21.156 (continuing contracts), and 21.211 (term contracts). *Education Code 26.008(b)*

DISCHARGE OF CONVICTED EMPLOYEES

The District shall discharge an employee if the District obtains information through a criminal history record information (CHRI) review that:

1. The employee has been convicted of:
   a. A felony under Penal Code Title 5;
   b. An offense requiring registration as a sex offender under Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 62; or
   c. An offense under the laws of another state or federal law that is equivalent to an offense under paragraphs a or b; and
2. At the time the offense occurred, the victim of the offense was under 18 years of age or was enrolled in a public school.

EXCEPTION

However, the District is not required to discharge an employee if the person committed an offense under Title 5, Penal Code, and:

1. The date of the offense is more than 30 years before June 15, 2007; and
2. The employee satisfied all terms of the court order entered on conviction.

CERTIFICATION TO SBEC

Each school year, the Superintendent shall certify to the Commissioner that the District has complied with the above provisions.

SANCTIONS

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) may impose a sanction on an educator who does not discharge an employee if the educator knows or should have known, through a criminal history record information review, that the

employee has been convicted of an offense described above.

OPTIONAL TERMINATION

The District may discharge an employee if the District obtains information of the employee's conviction of a felony or of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude that the employee did not disclose to SBEC or the District. An employee discharged is considered to have been discharged for misconduct for purposes of Labor Code 207.044 (unemployment compensation). *Education Code 22.085* [See DBAA]

CERTAIN OFFENSES AGAINST STUDENTS MANDATORY TERMINATION

If the District receives notice that SBEC has revoked the certificate of a person based on conviction for a felony under Penal Code Title 5 or an offense requiring registration as a sex offender, and the victim of the offense is under 18 years of age, the District shall:

1. Immediately remove the person whose certificate has been revoked from campus or from an administrative office, as applicable, to prevent the person from having any contact with a student; and
2. If the person is employed under a probationary, continuing, or term contract:
    a. Suspend the person without pay;
    b. Provide the person with written notice that the person's contract is void [see NOTICE TO EMPLOYEE, below]; and
    c. Terminate the employment of the person as soon as practicable.

Education Code 21.058(a),(c)

DISCRETIONARY TERMINATION

If the District becomes aware that a person employed by the District under a probationary, continuing, or term contract has been convicted of or received deferred adjudication for a felony offense, and the person is not subject to the mandatory termination provision above, the District may:

1. Suspend the person without pay;
2. Provide the person with written notice that the person's contract is void [see NOTICE TO EMPLOYEE, below]; and
3. Terminate the employment of the person as soon as practicable.

Education Code 21.058(c-1)

NOTICE TO EMPLOYEE

A person's probationary, continuing, or term contract is void if the District provides written notice to the person, under the

mandatory or discretionary termination provisions above, that the person's contract is void. *Education Code 21.058(c-2)*

NO APPEAL

Action taken by the District under the mandatory or discretionary terminations provisions above is not subject to appeal under Education Code Chapter 21 and the notice and hearing requirements of Chapter 21 do not apply to the action. *Education Code 21.058(e)*

INVALID OR EXPIRED CERTIFICATION

An employee's probationary, term, or continuing contract is void if the employee:

1. Does not hold a valid certificate or permit issued by SBEC;
2. Fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend the employee's temporary, probationary, or emergency certificate or any other certificate or permit issued under Education Code Chapter 21, Subchapter B; or
3. Fails to comply with any requirement under Education Code Chapter 22, Subchapter C [criminal history review, see DBAA], if the failure results in suspension or revocation of the employee's certificate.

Education Code 21.0031(a)

A certificate or permit is not considered to have expired if:

1. The employee has completed the requirements for renewal of the certificate or permit;
2. The employee submitted the request for renewal before the expiration date; and
3. The date the certificate or permit would have expired is before the date SBEC takes action to approve the renewal of the certificate or permit.

Education Code 21.0031(f)

DISTRICT'S OPTIONS

If the District has knowledge that an employee's contract is void under Education Code 21.0031(a), the District may:

1. Terminate the employee;
2. Suspend the employee with or without pay; or
3. Retain the employee for the remainder of the school year on an at-will employment basis in a position that does not require a contract under Education Code 21.002, at the employee's existing rate of pay or at a reduced rate.

The employee is not entitled to the minimum salary prescribed by Education Code 21.402.

Education Code 21.0031(b)

EXCEPTION

The District may not terminate or suspend an employee under 21.0031(b) because of the employee's lack of a valid certificate or permit, or failure to renew or extend a certificate or permit, if:

1. The employee requests an extension from SBEC to renew, extend, or otherwise validate the employee's certificate or permit; and
2. Not later than the 10th day after the date the contract is void, the employee takes necessary measures to renew, extend, or otherwise validate the employee's certificate or permit, as determined by SBEC.

Education Code 21.0031(b-1)

NO APPEAL OR CHAPTER 21 HEARING

The District's decision under Education Code 21.0031(b) is not subject to appeal under Education Code Chapter 21, and the notice and hearing requirements of that chapter do not apply to the decision. *Education Code 21.0031*

APPLICABILITY

These void contract provisions do not affect the rights and remedies of a party in an at-will employment relationship and do not apply to a certified teacher assigned to teach a subject for which the teacher is not certified. *Education Code 21.0031; Nunez v. Simms, 341 F.3d 385 (5th Cir. 2003)*

REPORT TO SBEC OF EDUCATOR MISCONDUCT

In addition to the reporting requirement under Family Code 261.101 [see FFG], the Superintendent must file a written report with SBEC not later than the seventh day after the Superintendent first obtains or has knowledge of information indicating that a certificate holder's employment at the District was terminated based on a determination that the certificate holder:

1. Sexually or physically abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor;
2. Possessed, transferred, sold, or distributed a controlled substance, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 481 or by 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et seq,;
3. Illegally transferred, appropriated, or expended funds or other property of the District;
4. Attempted by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter a professional certificate or permit for the

purposes of promotion or additional compensation;

5. Committed a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on school property or at a school-sponsored event; or

6. Solicited or engaged in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.

The Superintendent may notify SBEC of any educator misconduct that the Superintendent believes in good faith may be subject to sanctions by SBEC.

[See DH (LEGAL) regarding contents of report to SBEC.]

Education Code 21.006; 19 TAC 249.14(d)

DEFINITIONS
"ABUSE"

"Abuse" includes the following acts or omissions:

1. Mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning.

2. Causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional in-jury that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning.

3. Physical injury that results in substantial harm to a student or minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the student or minor, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline; or

4. Sexual conduct harmful to a student's or minor's mental, emotional, or physical welfare.

19 TAC 249.3(1)

"SOLICITATION OF A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP"

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

educator of a romantic relationship with a student:

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

    a. The nature of the communications;

    b. The timing of the communications;

    c. The extent of the communications;

    d. Whether the communications were made openly or secretly;

    e. The extent that the educator attempts to conceal the communications;

    f. If the educator claims to be counseling a student, SBEC may consider whether the educator's job duties included counseling, whether the educator reported the subject of the counseling to the student's guardians or to the appropriate school personnel, or, in the case of alleged abuse or neglect, whether the educator reported the abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities; and

    g. Any other evidence tending to show the context of the communications between educator and student.

2. Making inappropriate comments about a student's body, creating or transmitting sexually suggestive photographs or images, or encouraging the student to transmit sexually suggestive photographs or images.

3. Making sexually demeaning comments to a student.

4. Making comments about a student's potential sexual performance.

5. Requesting details of a student's sexual history.

6. Requesting a date, sexual contact, or any activity intended for the sexual gratification of the educator.

7. Engaging in conversations regarding the sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party.

8. Inappropriate hugging, kissing, or excessive touching.

9. Providing the student with drugs or alcohol.
10. 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(51)

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Policies DG, FFG, GRA

All employees with reasonable cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect, as defined by Texas Family Code §261.001, are required by state law to make a report to a law enforcement agency, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering the facility) within 24 hours after the employee first has reasonable cause to believe that the child has been abused or neglected. Law enforcement agency includes the Texas Department of Public Safety, a municipal police department, a county sheriff's office, or a county constable's office and does not include the district police.

If the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of a child (including a teacher), the report of alleged abuse or neglect must be made to DFPS even if a report is made to law enforcement.

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

Reports to DFPS can be made using the Texas Abuse Hotline online at https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx or (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, a person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the district is prohibited from taking an adverse employment action against a certified or licensed professional who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

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

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

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

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

Sexual Abuse or Maltreatment of Children

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed in Board Policy on the district website or at the administration building. 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 otherwise maltreated. Abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined to include any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of continous sexual abuse of a yound child or disabled individual, indecency with a child, improper relationship between an educator and a student, sexual assault, or encouraging a child to engage in sexual conduct, as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect following the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

Reports to Texas Education Agency

Policies DF, DHB, DHC

The conduct of an employee must be reported to TEA within 48 hours 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
- Engaged in inappropriate communication with a student or minor
- Failed to maintain appropriate boundaries with a student or minor

For a certified employee, the conduct below must also be reported:

- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of district or school property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation
- Committing a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on district property or at a school-sponsored event.

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

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 the 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
- Artificial intelligence (AI) should only be used as a support tool to improve student outcomes, not to replace the decisions made by teachers or students

Electronic mail transmissions and other uses 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 policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the Technology Department.

Personal Use of Electronic Communications

Policy CQ, DH

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

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

An employee who uses electronic communications for personal purposes shall observe the following:

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment.
- The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, mealtimes, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct district business.
- The employee shall not use district and campus trademarks, including names, logo, mascots, and symbols, or other copyrighted material on social media or in texts without express, written consent.
- An employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on district business unless the employee first obtains written approval from the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy concerns.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the

employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:

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

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

Electronic Communications between Employees and Students

Policy DH

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

An employee is not subject to these provisions 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 communication between the employee and the student.

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

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

- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes one-way communication as well as dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*; however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.
- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, school psychologists, and athletic trainers.

An employee who communicates electronically with students shall observe the following:

- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students using any form of electronic communications, including mobile and web applications, that are not provided or accessible by the district unless a specific exception is noted below.
- Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility. An employee who communicates with a student using text messaging shall comply with the following protocol: Select one or more of the steps below to establish the protocol employees must follow

  - For each text message addressed to one or more students, the employee shall send a copy of the text message to the employee's district email address.
- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page ("professional page") for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee's professional page.
- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics including:
  - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
  - Copyright law [Policy CY]
  - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DH]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with one or more currently enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue

communicating with the student through email, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

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

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

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

Criminal History Background Checks

Policy DBAA

All employees are 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 and entered into the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Clearinghouse. This database provides the district and SBEC with access to an employee's current national criminal history and updates to the employee's subsequent criminal history.

Employee Arrests and Convictions

Policy DH, DHB, DHC

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

- Crimes involving school property or funds
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part of school property or at a school-sponsored activity
- Crimes involving moral turpitude

Moral turpitude includes the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft
- Misrepresentation
- Deliberate violence
- Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor
- Crimes involving any felony possession or conspiracy to possess, or any misdemeanor or felony transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance
- Felonies involving driving while intoxicated (DWI) or driving under the influence (DUI) of drugs or alcohol
- Acts constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code.

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

The superintendent is required to report the misconduct or criminal history of an employee to TEA. Information about misconduct or allegations of misconduct of an employee obtained by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse will be reported to TEA. Refer to Policies DHS (LEGAL) and DHC (LEGAL) for timelines and conduct that will result in reporting.

Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention

Policy DH

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

EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT DH (LOCAL)

Each District employees shall perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, District policy, and ethical standards. [See DH (EXHIBIT)]

Each District employees shall recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community and shall work cooperatively with others to serve the best interests of the District.

An employee wishing to express concern, complaints, or criticism shall do so through appropriate channels. [See DGBA]

VIOLATIONS OF STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Each employee shall comply with the standards of conduct set out in this policy and with any other policies, regulations, and guidelines that impose duties, requirements, or standards attendant to their status as District employees. Violation of any policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment. [See DCD and DF series]

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Electronic media 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, editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites. Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication, such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.

USE WITH STUDENTS

In accordance with administrative regulations, a certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the Superintendent or a campus principal, may use electronic media to communicate with currently enrolled students about matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities. All other employees are prohibited from using electronic media to communicate directly with students who are currently enrolled in the District. The regulations shall address:

1. Exceptions for family and social relationships;
2. The circumstances under which employees may use text messaging to communicate with students; and
3. Other matters deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or designee.

Each employee shall comply with the District's requirements for records retention and destruction to the extent those requirements apply to electronic media. [See CPC]

PERSONAL USE

An employee shall be held to the same professional standards in his or her public use of electronic media as for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic media violates state or federal law or District policy or 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.

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

All employees shall adhere to District safety rules and regulations and shall report unsafe conditions or practices to the appropriate supervisor.

HARASSMENT OR ABUSE

An employee shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of:

1. Other employees. [See DIA]

2. Students. [See FFH; see FFG regarding child abuse and neglect]

While acting in the course of their employment, an employee shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other persons, including Board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

An employee shall not form romantic or other inappropriate social relationships with students. Any sexual relationship between a student and a District employee is always prohibited, even if consensual. [See FFH]

TOBACCO USE

An employee shall not use tobacco products on District premises, in District vehicles, or at school or school-related activities. [See also GKA]

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

An employee shall not manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances during working hours while at school or at school-related activities during or outside of usual working hours:

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

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

EXCEPTIONS

An employee who manufactures, possesses, or dispenses a substance listed above as part of the employee's job responsibilities, or who uses a drug authorized by a licensed physician prescribed for the employee's personal use shall not be considered to have violated this policy.

NOTICE

Each employee shall be given a copy of the District's notice regarding drug-free schools. [See DI (EXHIBIT)]

A copy of this policy, the purpose of which is to eliminate drug abuse from the workplace, shall be provided to each employee at the beginning of each year or upon employment.

ARRESTS, INDICTMENTS, CONVICTIONS, AND OTHER

An employee shall notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of any arrest, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of the employee for any felony, any offense involving moral

ADJUDICATIONS

turpitude, and any of the other offenses as indicated below:

1. Crimes involving school property or funds;
2. Crimes involving attempts 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;
3. Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity; or
4. Crimes involving moral turpitude, which include:
   - 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;
   - Felony possession, transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to possess, transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance defined in Chapter 481 of the Health and Safety Code;
   - Acts constituting public intoxication, operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, or disorderly conduct, if any two or more acts are committed within any 12-month period; or
   - Acts constituting abuse under the Texas Family Code.

Professional Dress and Grooming

As representatives of Huffman ISD, our appearance reflects the professionalism, pride and high standards we have for ourselves, our students, and district. An employee's dress and grooming shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for their assignments, and in accordance with any additional standards established by his or her supervisor and approved by the Superintendent.

Examples of inappropriate attire for employees include, but are not limited to:

- Holes in jeans including tears and frayed openings
- Peek-a-boo or cut-out shirts including exposed undergarments or excessively revealing clothing
- Lengths of dresses, skirts, shorts*, and similar attire that does not allow staff to move, bend, and engage with students comfortably and professionally. The length should not be shorter than mid-thigh.
- Crocs, house shoes, slippers or other casual footwear not intended for a professional workplace.

*Shorts are only permitted for coaches, PE, and/or other approved events such as field day by the supervisor or summer work.

Tobacco Products and E-Cigarette Use

Policies DH, FNCD GKA

State law prohibits smoking, using e-cigarettes or tobacco products on all district-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off school property. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. Drivers of district-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking, using tobacco products or e-cigarettes defined by Texas Health and Safety Code §161.081 while inside the vehicle. Notices stating that smoking is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine are displayed in prominent places in all school buildings.

"E-cigarette" means an electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device or a consumable liquid solution or other material aerosolized or vaporized during the use of an electronic cigarette or other device, regardless of whether the liquid solution or material contains nicotine. The term does not include a prescription medical device, prescription medication, or other prescribed substance unrelated to the cessation of smoking. The term "e-cigarette" includes:

1. A device regardless of whether if is manufactured, distributed, or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, or e-pipe or under another product name or description: and
2. A component, part, or accessory for the device, regardless of whether the component, part, or accessory is sold separately from the device.

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

Fraud and Financial Impropriety

Policy CAA

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

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district, except as otherwise permitted by law or district policy

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

Conflict of Interest

Policy DBD

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

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

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

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

Associations and Political Activities

Policy DGA

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

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

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

Charitable Contributions

Policy DG

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

Safety and Security

Policy CK series

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety and security program includes written guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. See Emergencies on page 89 for additional information.

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

To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students and to protect and conserve district equipment, employees must comply with the following requirements:

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

While driving on district business, employees are required to abide by all state and local traffic laws. Employees driving on district business are prohibited from texting and using other

electronic devices that require both visual and manual attention while the vehicle is in motion. Employees will exercise care and sound judgment on whether to use hands-free technology while the vehicle is in motion.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the Human Resource Department.

Possession of Firearms and Weapons

Policies DH, FNCG, GKA

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. A person, including an employee, who holds a license to carry a handgun may transport or store a handgun or other firearm or ammunition in a locked vehicle in a parking lot, garage, or other district provided parking area, provided the handgun or firearm or ammunition is properly stored, and not in plain view. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisor or call 911 immediately.

School Marshal Program

Policy CKEB

The board may appoint one or more school marshals for each campus. Education Code 37.0811(a)

A school marshal is a person who is appointed to serve as a school marshal by the board under Education Code 37.0811, is licensed under Occupations Code 1701.260, and has powers and duties described by Code of Criminal Procedure Article 2.127. Occupations Code 1701.001(8)

The board may select for appointment as a school marshal an applicant who is an employee of the district and certified as eligible for appointment under Occupations Code 1701.260. Education Code 37.0811(b)

To be eligible for appointment as a school marshal, an applicant shall:

- Successfully complete all prerequisite Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) training;
- Pass the state licensing exam;
- Be employed and appointed by an authorized school district; and
- Meet all statutory requirements, including psychological fitness.

Visitors in the Workplace

Policy GKC

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

Asbestos Management Plan

Policy CKA

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

Pest Control Treatment

Policies CLB, DI

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

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

General Procedures

Emergency School Closing

Policy EB

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

KPRC – CHANNEL 2
KHOU – CHANNEL 11
KTRK – CHANNEL 13
KRIV – CHANNEL 26

Emergencies

Policies CKC, CKD

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

Purchasing Procedures

Policy CH

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

Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Human Resources Department if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. Employees may log in to the Employee Self-Service (ESS) system to make changes. Name changes require updated Social Security cards.

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 is confidential and may not be released without the employee's permission.

Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

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

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

Facility Use

Policies DGA, GKD

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The principal is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the Director of Facilities and Risk Management's Administrative Assistant at 281-324-2425 to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

Termination of Employment

Resignations

Policy DFE, DHB

Contract Employees. Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Superintendent.

Contract employees may resign at any 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:

- Certain misconduct, abuse, unlawful act
- Involvement or solicitation of a romantic relationship with a student or minor
- Solicitation or engaging in sexual conduct with a student or minor
- Inappropriate communications with a student or minor
- Failure to maintain appropriate boundaries with a student or minor
- Possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- 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 superintendent is required to report such conduct to SBEC.

Noncontract Employees. Noncontract employees may resign from 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 or director is required to notify the superintendent of a noncertified employee's resignation or termination within seven business days for any of the following:

- Alleged incident of misconduct of abuse or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor, or
- Was involved in or solicited a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual conduct with a student or minor
- Engaged in inappropriate communications with a student or minor
- Failed to maintain appropriate boundaries with a student or minor

Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

Policies DF Series, DHB, DP

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be nonrenewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The times 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 reporting requirements for termination of a contract employee are the same as those listed above in Resignations/Contract employees.

Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when their 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 DHC, DP

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, or 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 43)

The reporting requirements for termination of a noncertified employee are the same as those listed above in Resignations/Noncontract Employees.

Discharge of Convicted Employees

Policy DF

The district shall discharge any employee who has been convicted of a felony under Title 5 Penal Code or convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for the following:

- An offense requiring the registration as a sex offender
- Improper relationship between an educator and a student
- Sale, distribution, or display of harmful materials to a minor
- Public indecency
- A felony offense involving school property

If the Title 5, Penal Code 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 for does not apply.

Prohibition on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Policies DF, DH

Except as required by state or federal law, district employees are prohibited from engaging in diversity, equity, and inclusion activities, including assigning diversity, equity, and inclusion duties to any person. Any employee who intentionally or knowingly engages in or assigns diversity, equity, and inclusion duties to another person will be subject to appropriate discipline, including termination of employment.

Prohibited Classroom Instruction

Policies DF, DH

District employees are prohibited from engagning in an act prohibited by Education Code 28.0022 (Certain Instructional Requirements and Prohibitions). Any district employee intentionally or knowingly engaging in or assigning to another individual activities related to controversial topics described in Education Code 28.0022 is subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Exit Surveys and Procedures

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

Reports to the Texas Education Agency

Policies DF, DHB, DHC

Certified Employees. The resignation or termination of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigation 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 illegal conduct with a student or a minor
- Soliciting or engaging in sexual contact or a romantic relationship with a student or minor
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of district or school property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation

- Committing a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on district property or at a school-sponsored event

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

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

Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

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

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

Student Issues

Equal Educational Opportunities

Policies FB, FFH

In an effort to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Huffman ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Questions or concerns about discrimination against students based on sex, including sexual harassment, should be directed to the Superintendent or the district's Title IX coordinator. Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to the Superintendent or the district ADA/Section 504 coordinator. All other questions or concerns relating to discrimination based on any other reason should be directed to the Superintendent.

Student Records

Policy FL

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

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

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

Parent and Student Complaints

Policy FNG

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

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teacher or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved to their

satisfaction should be directed to the campus principal. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with a principal's response.

Administering Medication to Students

Policy FFAC

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

Dietary Supplements

Policies DH, FFAC

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

Psychotropic Drugs

Policy FFAC

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

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

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

Student Conduct and Discipline

Policies in the FN series and FO series

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

Student Attendance

Policy FEB

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the district's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require minor students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student upon returning to school, must 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 their supervisor. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and is reprinted below:
FFI (LOCAL)

STUDENT WELFARE — FFI
FREEDOM FROM BULLYING — (LOCAL)

Note: This policy addresses bullying of District students. For provisions regarding discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving District students, see FFH. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

BULLYING PROHIBITED

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

DEFINITION

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression or physical conduct that:

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

EXAMPLES

Bullying of a student may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, and ostracism.

TIMELY REPORTING

Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the

alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to promptly report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee. A report may be made orally or in writing.

NOTICE OF REPORT

Any District employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the campus principal or designee.

INVESTIGATION OF REPORT

If a report is made orally, the campus principal or designee shall reduce the report to written form.

The campus principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, and if so proceed under that policy instead.

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

CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION

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

The campus principal or designee shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including a determination of whether bullying occurred, and send a copy to the Superintendent or designee.

DISTRICT ACTION

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct. [For information on student transfers due to bullying, see FDB.]

The District may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the District concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying under this policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

APPEAL	A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG (LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.
RECORDS RETENTION	Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC (LOCAL).
ACCESS TO POLICY	Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to District employees and included in the student handbook. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

Hazing

Policy FNCC

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of "initiation rites" of a school club or organization. While most initiation rites are permissible, engaging in or permitting "hazing" is a criminal offense. Any teacher, administrator, or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus administrator.