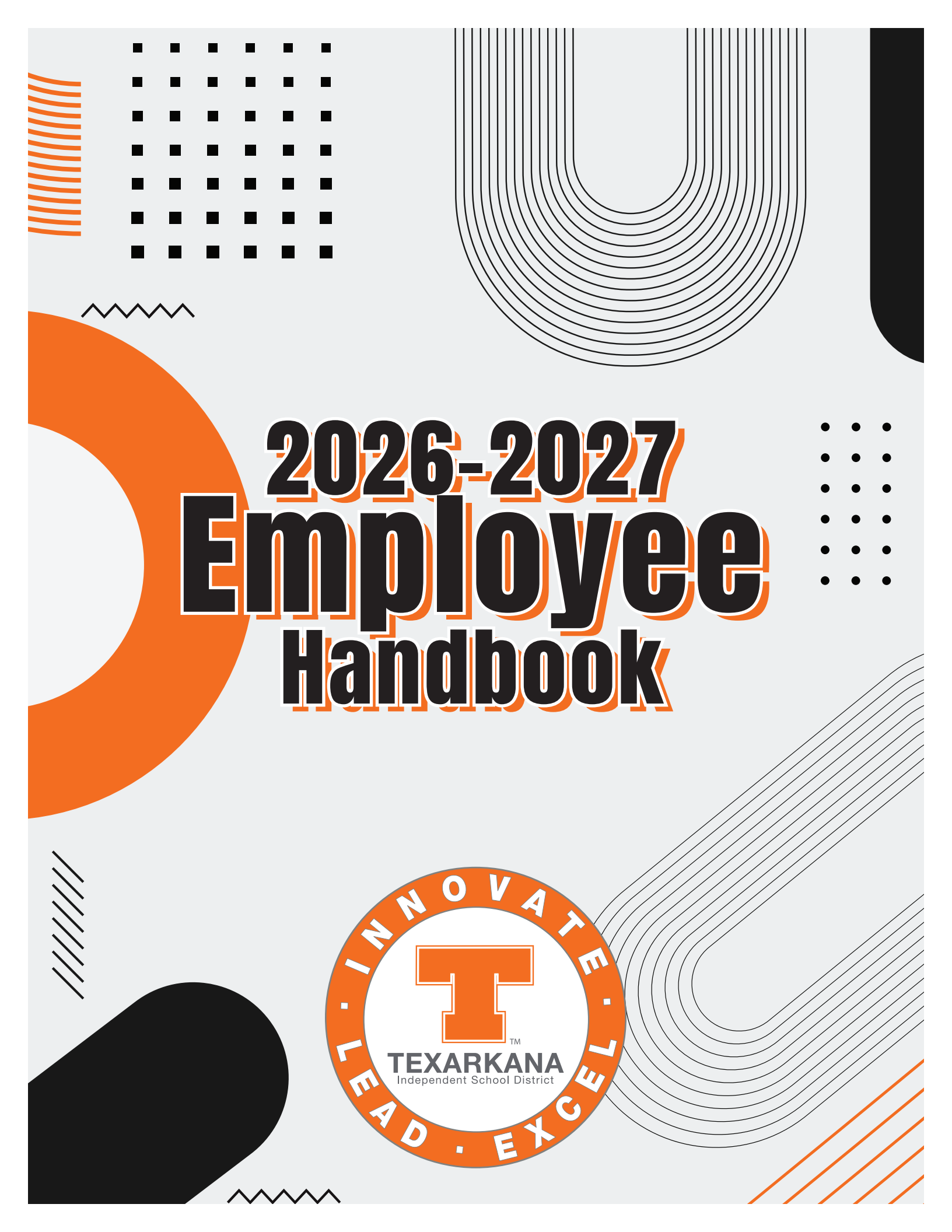




2026-2027 Employee Handbook



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Introduction

Outstanding people are the key to the success of Texarkana Independent School District. Through the efforts of our people, TISD has become a leader in the education community in this region.

To ensure continued success, all employees must understand TISD's policies and procedures. 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 referenced have been summarized. Full text of policies and procedures that have been approved by the Board of Trustees are available for any employee's review on the district website, www.txkisd.net. If any conflict exists between the language of this handbook and the language of a Board-approved policy or procedure, the formal language of the Board policies and procedures govern, not the informal wording of this handbook. 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 non-contract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of District policies and procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate district office. District policies can be accessed online at www.txkisd.net.

Note: The information included in this Employee Handbook may not reflect all statutory changes resulting from the most recent session of the Texas Legislature. The district reserves the right to make adjustments accordingly in response to legislative changes.

Employee Handbook Receipt

ID Number _____

Employee Name _____ Campus/Dept. _____

I hereby acknowledge I have been informed that I have computer access to the Texarkana ISD Employee Handbook, located on Texarkana ISD's home web page address at <http://www.txkisd.net>. I am also aware that I have access to a hard copy of the employee handbook located at the District administrative central office.

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

I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document. The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in District policies may supersede, modify, or eliminate the information summarized in this booklet. As the District provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

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

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

Signature

Date

SIGN AND DATE THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT.

If you would like Human Resources to provide you with a hardcopy of the Employee Handbook, initial here_____.

NOTE: All employees will complete this document at the beginning of each school year, along with other required annual forms. This is included as a sample of the document that all employees sign.

District Information

Description of the District

Texarkana Independent School District was established in 1886 and is accredited by the Texas Education Agency. The district provides quality education for pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Additionally, the District operates the Tiger Learning Center that provides childcare services for infants and toddlers and after-school care for elementary age students. The district strives to provide a variety of educational opportunities and involvement for the entire community.

The district philosophy expresses a desire for students to achieve intellectual, social, physical, and occupational competence through their learning activities. Emphasis on academic and vocational activities provides students with opportunities for total development.

Personnel in TISD receive extensive, on-going professional development opportunities. As the school staff is provided with new and better tools for instruction and management, the district believes it will be better able to guarantee that all students will be exposed to a quality environment that will ensure learning.

The district enrollment is approximately 7,100 students. Texarkana ISD serves the student population with a staff of approximately 1,200 teachers, administrators, and support personnel.

District Mission Statement

The mission of Texarkana ISD, a culturally diverse and premier learning community, is to develop and empower every individual by providing innovative and varied opportunities to lead and excel in a global society through strong family, community, and staff partnerships.

District of Innovation

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas legislative Session in 2015 and provides Texas public school districts with the opportunity to be designated as a District of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements and academic and financial accountability.

Term

Texarkana ISD's current District of Innovation Plan became effective on December 13, 2023, and remains in effect for five years, through December 13, 2028, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees, in accordance with the law, or by legislative action. The DQIC will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the Plan.

The full contents of the TISD District of Innovation Plan, including all approved exemptions, can be found on the district's website at <https://www.txkisd.net/our-district/district-of-innovation-plan>.

Board of Trustees

(Policies BA, BB, BD, BE) 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, facilities, and expansions. The Board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal law and regulations.

The Board of Trustees is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the district's children. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters and must reside in the district. The Board consists of seven members, two elected at large and five elected from single-member Districts in accordance with Texas law, serving terms of three years, with elections held annually. The terms of one-third of the Board members, or as near to one-third as possible, expire each year. Education Code 11.051(b), 11.052, 11.059

All TISD Board Policies can be accessed and viewed through the TISD website or through the following Internet address: <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/206>.

Current Board Members

President: Amy Bowers, Vice President: Paul Miller, Secretary: Bryan DePriest; Members: Wanda Boyette, Bill Kimbro, Ben King, and Pastor Ronald Ruffin.

Trustees usually meet the last Tuesday of each month at 5 pm. in the TISD Administration Building, located at 4241 Summerhill Rd, Texarkana, Texas. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the District Web site and at the Administration Building, located at 4241 Summerhill Road, Texarkana, Texas, or at other designated locations in the district 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 one-hour notice.

All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the Board to go into a closed session from which the public and others are excluded. Closed sessions 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 to consult with attorneys regarding pending litigation.

Helpful Contacts

From time to time, employees have questions or concerns. If supervisors cannot answer those questions or concerns, the employee is encouraged to contact the appropriate department or individuals listed in the administrative, support services and campus directories.

Central Office Administrative Staff

4241 Summerhill Road
(903) 794-3651

Texarkana, Texas 75503
Fax (903) 792-2632

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

Sherri Penix

Chief of Elementary Schools

Christy Tidwell

Chief Financial Officer

Anita Clay

Chief Operating Officer

Todd Marshall

Executive Directors

Athletics

Gerry Stanford

Human Resources

Kay Stickels

Executive Director of Student and Family Support Services/Middle School Principal

Lakesha Taylor

Directors

Chief of Police/Director of Security

Brad Irvin

Child Care Services

Jennifer Treadway

Child Nutrition

David Stickels

College & Career Readiness

Lauren Pilgreen

Communications, Marketing &

Development

Kelly Bixler

Curriculum & Instruction

Nichole Smith

DAEP and BASE

Julius Anderson

Facility Services

Jeremy Harrell

Information Technology

Rusty Ogburn

Maintenance & Construction

Jason Green

Music & Band

John "Bass" Deese

Special Populations

Kay Stickels (Interim)

State & Federal Programs

Elodia Witterstaetter

Student Information Services

Amanda Eisley

Transportation

Kaye Oliver

Directory of Schools

OPTIONS

401 W. 25th Street
Texarkana, TX 75503

Principal

903-793-5632
Fax 903-798-2131

Dr. Tabitha Dudley

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR EARLY EDUCATION CENTER

1201 Carroll Ave.
Texarkana, TX 75501

Principal
Assistant Principal

903-794-3786
Fax 903-798-2137

Dr. Karen Brown
Julie Watson

PARKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1915 Pine Street
Texarkana, TX 75501

Principal
Assistant Principals

903-798-6886
Fax 903-798-6890

Audrey Shumate
Brionna Wilson
Jennifer Stacy

MORRISS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

4826 University Park
Texarkana, TX 75503

Principal
Assistant Principal

903-791-2262
Fax 903-798-6875

Patti O'Bannon
Alice McKinnon

NASH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

100 Burton
Nash, TX 75569

Principal
Assistant Principal

903-838-4321
Fax 903-831-7158

Liliana Luna
Crystal Smith

TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL

4001 Summerhill Road
Texarkana, TX 75503

Principal
Associate Principals

Assistant Principals

903-794-3891
Fax 903-792-8971

Amy Harrison
Jo Dee Lott
Erin Davis
Adam Bell
Shawn Davis
Natosha Jones
Theresa Knight-Allen

TEXAS MIDDLE SCHOOL

2100 College Drive
Texarkana, TX 75503

Principal
Associate Principal
Assistant Principals

903-793-5631
Fax 903-792-2935

Lakesha Taylor
Franshicka Banks-Brown
Romegan Ford
Ocie Hanes
Jeanna Morris
Erica Dixon
Kendrick Smith
Quoquise Nickleberry

DAEP and BASE

401 W. 25th Street
Texarkana, TX 75503

Director

903-793-5632

Julius Anderson

WAGGONER CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

6335 Gibson Lane
Texarkana, TX 75503

Principal
Assistant Principal

903-255-3301
Fax 903-223-7945

Melodie White
Rachel Sparks

WAKE VILLAGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

400 Wildcat Drive
Wake Village, TX 75501

Principal
Assistant Principals

903-838-4261
Fax 903-832-6809

Dr. Jacquelyn Smith
Amber Merrick
Derek Murphy

Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity

(Policies DAA, DIA)

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, the Texarkana Independent School District does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), age, national origin, 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 participate 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: Kay Stickels, Executive Director of Human Resources, 2208 Kennedy Lane, Texarkana, Texas 75503, Kay.Stickels@txkisd.net, 903-794-8473.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator for employee concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: Kay Stickels, Executive Director of Human Resources, 2208 Kennedy Lane, Texarkana, Texas 75503, Kay.Stickels@txkisd.net, 903-794-8473.

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 and posted at the central administration building, and on the District's Web site at www.txkisd.net.

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 Web Site (www.trs.texas.gov).

Contract and Non-Contract Employment

(Policy DC series)

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

Probationary Contracts. Nurses and full-time professional employees new to the district and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive a probationary contract during their first year of employment. Former employees who are hired after a two-year lapse in District employment or employees who move to a position requiring a new class of certification may also be employed by probationary contract. Probationary contracts are one-year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five

of the eight years preceding employment with the district may not exceed one school year except as provided in the District of Innovation plan.

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 annually and upon request. 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 non-instructional administrators) are employed by a one-year contract that is not subject to the provisions for nonrenewal or termination under the Texas Education Code.

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

Certification and Licenses

(Policies DBA, DF)

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to the Human Resources office in a timely manner. Employees licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR) must notify Human Resources 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, at 903-794-8473 if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

Recertification of Employment Authorization

(Policy DC)

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

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

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

(Policies CQ, DHE)

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

submit to testing or is found to violate district policy.

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

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

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

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

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 the Coordinator of Risk Management at 1600 Waterall Street, Texarkana, Texas 75501, by the first day of school each school year.

Nurses, athletic coaches or sponsors, PE teachers, marching band directors, cheer leading 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 the Coordinator of Risk Management at 1600 Waterall Street, Texarkana, Texas 75501, by the first day of school each school year.

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

Reassignments and Transfers

(Policy DK)

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

The transfer process will be determined each year by administration and communicated to employees, including how employees may apply for or request a transfer and the deadline by which any transfers must be completed prior to the start of a new school year.

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 Resources Department.

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 required start, 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 will receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without **prior approval** from their supervisor. See *Overtime Compensation* for additional information.

ADA Accommodations

(Policies DAA, DBB, DIA)

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 undue hardship.

An employee or their supervisor may initiate a request for accommodation by contacting and identifying an adjustment or change at work that is needed because of a disability. An employee also may submit a written request to HR using the ADA Accommodations Request Form which is available.

Upon receiving the reasonable accommodation request, HR or the ADA coordinator will meet with the employee and conduct an informal, interactive discussion to identify an accommodation 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.

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.

Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk

(Policies DEAB, DG)

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

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

The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections of Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP Act) requires an employee to notify the district if they believe the district is out of compliance in providing breaks for a nursing mother. The employee must give the district 10 days to come into compliance before making any claim of liability against the district. An employee with concerns should contact Kay Stickels, Executive Director of Human Resources at 903-794-8473.

Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) provides consideration of accommodations to employees who have known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. An employee seeking a PWFA accommodation should contact Kay Stickels, Executive Director of Human Resources, 903-794-8473 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 teacher. 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 substitutes. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call Erika Sesler, HR Coordinator, at 903-794-8473, ext. 1016.

Outside Employment and Tutoring

(Policy DBD)

All 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 (other than employees primarily responsible for in-class instruction) 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, may not receive financial benefits for performing personal services for *any* business entity that conducts or solicits business with the district. With exceptions as noted below, 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.

Exceptions apply 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. To be approved, services must be performed during the administrator's personal time. Contact Kay Stickels, Executive Director of Human Resources, for more information.

Performance Evaluation

(Policies DN, DPB series)

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continuous process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually. Written evaluations will be completed on forms approved by the district. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda 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. For non-teaching personnel, the overall performance evaluation rating must meet expectations with a minimum rating of 3.0 in order to be eligible for an annual pay raise approved through the budget process by the Board of Trustees.

Upon receiving a report, a nursing review committee may review a nurse's nursing services, qualifications, a 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, Texarkana 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 may either be asked or 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 Instructional Services Department.

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 non-instructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g., bus drivers) and continued employee skill development. TISD provides staff development opportunities at the district, campus, and individual levels to meet the needs of all employees.

Teachers employed by TISD are expected to continue to learn and grow throughout their career as educators to provide the highest quality instruction to students. Teachers are expected to attend professional learning as needed to become familiar with advances in programming and/or new instructional materials and methods. **Dependent upon position, teachers may be required to attend training as a condition of employment.**

A comprehensive professional learning plan shall be developed each year to support the execution of the district's strategic plan and improvement plan. This plan shall include a schedule of the annual required professional development for all District employees.

Mental Health Training

(Policy DMA)

All district employees who regularly interact with students are required to complete an evidenced-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 rules for mental health training.

Campus staff 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 the TISD Compensation Plan adopted by the Board of Trustees that outlines 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 nonexempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a work week. (See *Overtime Compensation*)

All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules at the start of each school year. Classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time counselors, and full-time nurses 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 Resources Department at (903) 794-8473, ext. 1050 for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

Teacher Incentive Allotment Performance Pay

The Board of Trustees may adjust the compensation for teachers as necessary to utilize funds available under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA). Distribution of Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) funds will comply with state law and Texas Education Agency guidance. For any funds received by Texarkana ISD on behalf of a designated teacher under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA), 90 percent of the allotment will be allocated to the designated teacher. This allocation represents gross compensation and is subject to all applicable payroll deductions, including federal taxes, retirement contributions (when applicable), and employee-elected benefit deductions. The remaining 10 percent of the allotment will be retained by the district to support the ongoing implementation, maintenance, and expansion of the TIA system, including professional development, training, administrative costs, TIA program leadership, and other activities necessary to sustain and strengthen the district's TIA program.

Paychecks and Automatic Payroll Deposit

All employees are paid monthly and must have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account at the bank of their choice. A new employee's first paycheck from the district will be a paper check. A notification period of twenty (20) days prior to the monthly pay date is necessary to change the location of employee's direct deposit. Contact the Business Office at 903-794-3651, ext. 1021, for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Employees are responsible for regularly reviewing the accuracy of their pay statement and should contact the payroll office at 903-794-3651, ext. 1021, with any questions. An employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions and withholding information. This can be accessed by utilizing the Skyward Employee Access Center at www.txkisd.net.

The schedule of pay dates for the new school year is as follows. The dates in bold are early paydays due to school holidays.

2026-2027 Pay Dates

- July 24, 2026
- August 25, 2026
- September 25, 2026
- October 23, 2026
- November 18, 2026
- December 16, 2026
- January 22, 2027
- February 25, 2027
- March 25, 2027
- April 23, 2027
- May 21, 2027
- June 24, 2027

Payroll Deductions

(Policy CFEA)

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

- Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) or Social Security employee contributions
- Federal income tax
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired in this District 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 deductions for payment of membership dues to professional organizations and charitable contributions to the TISD Education Foundation. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Overpayments

Employees are not entitled to any funds the district overpays. An overpayment occurs if an employee is paid more than the amount the employee should have been paid under the assigned pay grade and applicable supplemental pay. If an overpayment is reported in the current fiscal year, a payment plan will be developed to recoup the payment. Generally, an overpayment will be paid in one pay cycle. However, if this creates an undue hardship for the employee, the district has the discretion to develop a plan for regular payroll deductions in the same fiscal year.

An agreement between an employee and the district must be in place in order to deduct any overpayment.

Overtime Compensation

(Policies DEAB, DEC)

The district compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. All employees are classified as exempt or nonexempt for purposes of overtime compensation. Professional and administrative employees are ineligible for overtime compensation. Only nonexempt employees (hourly 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. Police officers will earn overtime for all hours worked in excess of 43 hours in a workweek.

Employees may be compensated for overtime (i.e., hours beyond 40 in a workweek) at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 80 hours of comp time.
- Comp time must be used in the duty year that it is earned.
- Use of comp time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval, as workload permits, or at the supervisor's direction.
- An employee is required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

Time Clocks/Hourly Employees

The Employee Identification Number as listed on your badge will serve as the employee ID for time clock purposes. This number is to be used to clock in and clock out.

For employees who clock in and out for all time worked, time clocks have been placed at various locations throughout the district and you must clock in and out on the clock that is designated by your supervisor. Be sure to follow the time shown on the time clock and not the time of other clocks. If your clocking terminal does not function properly, you should report this immediately to your supervisor.

Only **YOU** may clock in and out for yourself. Violation of this policy is grounds for immediate involuntary termination of employment for the employee who clocks in or out for another employee, and for the employee who allows another employee to clock in or out for him/her.

NEVER CLOCK ANOTHER EMPLOYEE'S TIME FOR ANY REASON. Willful falsification of work or absence records is grounds for immediate involuntary termination of employment.

If you leave the campus/department for a personal reason, **you must clock out**. You must have authorization from your supervisor to leave the campus/department for any reason during scheduled work time.

You are expected to report to work promptly at your scheduled time. Students and the jobs of other workers are dependent on you to be timely and to be ready to work at your start time. Hourly employees are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor.

Hourly employees on an accrued payment schedule that have worktime short of schedule and have not designated leave for this time, may be docked for time short of schedule.

You may clock in up to five minutes before the start of your scheduled work time. If you clock in later than five minutes after your scheduled start time, the timekeeping system will record you as "tardy". This five-minute grace period is to be used only on an occasional, emergency basis. Abuse of the grace period may result in corrective action.

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) allows rounding of employee work hours. The regulation allows rounding time to the nearest five minutes, six minutes (one-tenth of an hour), or quarter hour. However, the employer must round both up and down. This averages out to be fair to both the employee and the employer. The employer may not round time so that the benefit always accrues to the employer.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

(Policy DEE)

Before an employee incurs any travel expenses, the employee's supervisor must grant approval. Reimbursement rates will be based on the IRS and Board-approved rates which were in effect at the time of the employee travel. For more details, see the Administrative Regulation DEE for Guidelines and Procedures for Professional Travel.

Employees must submit receipts to be reimbursed for allowable expenses other than mileage. Reimbursement remittance of one-day travel expenses are considered income by the IRS and will be made through the Payroll Department. Other allowable and approved travel reimbursement remittances will be made through the Accounts Payable Department.

Health 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

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31, each year. Current employees can make changes on their insurance coverage during open enrollment each year or when they experience a qualifying event (e.g., marriage, divorce, birth). **It is required that all employees in the district complete the enrollment requirements annually in order to either accept or decline coverage.** Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact Human Resources at 903-794-8473, ext. 1009 for more information.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

(Policy CRD)

The district provides contributions for each full-time employee to be covered for basic life insurance in the amount of their annual salary. The district also provides long-term disability insurance coverage for each full-time employee.

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for dental, cancer, vision, short term disability, additional life insurance, and certain other district-approved benefit plans. Premiums for these programs are paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact Human Resources at 903-794-8473, ext. 1009 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., cancer, 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 eligibility. **All employees must accept or reject this benefit on an annual basis and during the specified time period.**

Workers' Compensation Insurance

(Policy CRE)

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from Texas Association of School Boards Risk Management Fund, effective 7/1/2019. Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case.

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported **immediately** to the employee's immediate supervisor and the Human Resources Department at 903-794-3651, ext. 1016. Employees who are unable to work due to a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. See *Workers' Compensation Benefits* for information on use of paid leave for such absences.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance

(Policy CRF)

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have employment contracts or letters of reasonable assurance of returning to work. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact Human Resources at 903-794-8473 ext. 1050.

Teacher Retirement

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four and one-half months are members of the Texas 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 Kay Stickels, Executive Director of Human Resources, at 903-794-8473 ext. 1033 as soon as possible. Additional inquiries should be addressed to: 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 at www.trs.texas.gov. See *Employment After Retirement* for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

Annuities – Section 403(b)

(Policy CRG)

An employee may make direct contributions to an annuity or investment product that meets the requirements of Internal Revenue Code section 403(b). An employee may enter into a salary reduction agreement only if the qualified investment product is an eligible qualified investment and is registered with the Teacher Retirement System (TRS).

The IRS requires all employers who provide an optional deduction for a 403(b) Retirement plan for their employees to receive notice of the plan each year. Texarkana ISD offers the option to contribute to a 403(b)-retirement plan as an added benefit to employees. The 403(b)/457 retirement plans act very similar to a 401(k) plan and provide several benefits including:

More information on 403(b) plans, including a list of approved vendors, can be found here:

[https://web.mybenefitshub.com/texarkanaisd/2026-2027/benefit/TCG/403\(b\)](https://web.mybenefitshub.com/texarkanaisd/2026-2027/benefit/TCG/403(b))

Tuition-Free Attendance

(Policy FDA)

Transfer students who are children of full-time District employees may transfer into TISD schools on a tuition-free basis. For more information, contact the Student Enrollment Office at 903-794-8473 ext. 1030.

Child Care

The district operates Tiger Learning Centers (TLC) for childcare after school hours and during school breaks. Children of full-time employees are eligible for reduced tuition rates. Tiger Learning Centers are available at the following elementary school locations: Dunbar, Morriss, Nash, Parks, Wake Village and Waggoner Creek.

Infant and toddler care is also available at Wake Village Elementary School. For more information, please contact the TLC Administrative Office at 903-792-7991.

Leaves and Absences

(Policies CRD, DBB, DEC, DECA, DECB, DED, DG)

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 Human Resources, at 903-794-8473 ext. 1009, for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums and requirements for communicating with the district.

Leave is available for the employees' use at the beginning of the year. However, State Leave and Local leave is earned as you work through the course of your work year. If an employee leaves the district before the end of the work year, the cost of any unearned leave taken shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck. Paid leave will not be approved for more days than an employee has accumulated in prior years, plus those to be earned during the current year.

Leave will be accrued in hours. Hourly non-exempt employees that use the time clock will take their leave in hours and increments as designated by the district's software. Non-exempt professional employees must use leave in hours equivalent to a whole workday or hours equivalent to a half workday. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state and local leave provided. An employee may choose the order in which available state and local leave are used. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order:

1. Comp Time (if applicable)
2. Non-Duty (if applicable)
3. Vacation (if applicable)
4. Local Leave (used for Sick and reasons outlined under Local Leave)
5. State Sick Leave accumulated before the 1995-1996 school year
6. State Personal Leave
7. Dock Pay

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

If an hourly employee does not report or request leave of absence(s) according to district procedures, the incident is considered a "no call/no show". An employee who is absent for three 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 is found in Policy DECA (LEGAL).

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

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

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

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

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.

State Personal Leave

State law entitles all employees to leave equivalent to five workdays of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to the number of hours per day in an employee’s usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school Districts, and generally transfers to education service centers. Personal leave may be used for two general purposes: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

Non-Discretionary: Leave that is taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family or active military service is considered non-discretionary leave. Reasons for this type of leave requires very little, if any, advance planning. Non-discretionary leave may be used in the same manner as state sick leave.

Discretionary: Leave that is taken at an employee's discretion and that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor in advance of the anticipated absence. In deciding to approve discretionary personal leave, the supervisor or designee shall consider the effect of the employee’s absence on the educational program, as well as the availability of substitutes. **Discretionary use of leave shall not exceed three consecutive workdays.** Employees working on a 10-month schedule should schedule extended vacations during breaks. Discretionary leave for extended discretionary vacations during the 10-month work calendar may not be approved. An employee may use no more than five workdays of leave per school year for discretionary leave purposes. Discretionary leave may not be taken on the following key days without approval by the Superintendent or designee:

- Day before a school holiday
- Day after a school holiday
- Days scheduled for end of semester or end of year exams
- The first or last day of a grading period
- Days scheduled for state mandated testing
- Staff or professional development days

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 is no longer awarded by the State of Texas; however, 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

TISD professional employees receive local leave equivalent to three workdays per year. Paraprofessional and support staff receive local leave equivalent to two workdays per year. Only hours equivalent to 30 workdays may be carried forward from one year to the next. Any excess hours over the equivalent of 30 workdays at year end will be paid at a rate established by the district. Local leave may be used for the following reasons:

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

Vacation Leave for Employees Working 261-Day Schedules

(Policy DED)

Vacation leave shall be awarded to full-time employees who work a 261-day schedule. Employees must have twelve months of service before they are eligible to begin earning vacation time. Vacation days (hours) for each year are awarded on July 1st. Partial-year vacation days (hours) are awarded on the employee's one-year anniversary date. The amount of Vacation Days (hours) awarded shall be determined by the employee's years of service completed. Employees with 1-4 years of service will be given seven (7) days (56 hours) annually and employees with five (5) or more years will be given 12 days (96 hours) annually.

An employee shall receive prior approval from his or her immediate supervisor to use vacation hours. Approval of all leave requests will be dependent upon the needs of the district.

All full time, 12-month employees who work a 261-day schedule may accumulate up to 30 vacation days (240 hours). Any days (hours) over that will be lost as of July 1st each year. Vacation days (hours) are cumulative from year to year, not to exceed 30 days (240 hours).

An eligible employee who separates from service with the District shall be paid for unused earned vacation hours. If an employee separates from service before his or her last duty day of the work year, the employee's final paycheck shall be reduced for vacation hours the employee used but had not earned as of the date of separation.

Holiday Pay for Employees Working 261-Day Schedules

Employee groups that work a 261-day schedule are eligible for paid holidays and **will be** paid holiday pay if they are in the district's employ the day prior to the holiday. Employees that work a 261-day schedule who are out on paid leave the day of a holiday **will be** paid for the holiday, if they have sufficient leave to cover the day prior and the day after the holiday. An employee must be in a paid status the day before and the day after the holiday in order to receive the holiday pay.

Employees who work a 261-day schedule and who are out on approved Family Medical Leave and have used all accumulated leave prior to a holiday will **not be** paid for any holiday after all accumulated leave has been used. Employees on a 261-day schedule who are out on approved Catastrophic (CAT) leave **will be** paid holiday pay if a holiday falls during their use of CAT leave. The day will count as CAT leave.

Non-Duty Leave

Professional and paraprofessional employees on a 12-month assignment of 222 days have nonscheduled, Non-Duty leave. These are days remaining in the year after holidays and scheduled duty days have been satisfied. The amount of Non-Duty leave given shall be determined by the number of days left in the month of June, after 222 work days have been met for the year. Professional and paraprofessional employees shall be paid only for scheduled duty days.

Non-Duty leave shall be awarded to all employees on accrued salary who work a 222-day schedule. Non-Duty leave for each year is awarded on July 1st. Employees will be allowed to carry over Non-Duty leave equivalent to five workdays to the following school year. Any balance above the equivalent of five workdays as of July 1st of the current school year will not carry over, unless an exception is made by the Superintendent.

Use of Non-Duty leave shall require advance approval by the employee's immediate supervisor.

Catastrophic Leave Bank

(Policy DEC)

An annual Catastrophic Leave Bank is established each year to provide sick leave to employees for an unexpected serious catastrophic illness or injury. A catastrophic illness or injury is a severe, unforeseeable, unexpected, and undesired condition or combination of conditions and their complications. This type of illness or injury is a life altering event beyond the employee's control and affords little or no opportunity to consider or plan for the event. A catastrophic illness or injury is such a severe nature that it directly affects the mental or physical health of the employee to the extent that it requires the services of a licensed health care practitioner and subsequent hospital admittance, and as diagnosed by a licensed health care practitioner, results in the employee's incapacity to perform his or her job functions for a minimum of 30 calendar days. A catastrophic illness or injury forces the employee to exhaust all leave earned by that employee and to lose compensation from the district. Such conditions typically require prolonged hospitalization or recovery or are expected to result in disability or death. It includes a condition or event that creates a financial hardship for the employee, for which the employee is not receiving or cannot receive any other financial benefits (whether local, state, or federal). Complications resulting from pregnancy or childbirth shall be considered catastrophic if they meet the requirements of this paragraph.

All full-time personnel with benefits may become members of the bank. Membership is established by voluntarily donating local leave hours equivalent to one workday to the bank each year. The bank year is the time period of September 1 through August 31. Employees must enroll and make the minimum donation to the bank by September 1 of each bank year in order to be eligible for bank benefits during that year. Leave contributed to the bank shall be solely for the use of participating employees. An employee who is a member of the bank may request leave from the bank if the employee experiences a catastrophic illness or injury and exhausted all other accumulated leave by contacting the TISD Human Resources office at 903-794-8473, ext. 1009. The employee must provide a request in writing as well as the necessary paperwork and documentation. The catastrophic leave bank committee shall approve or disapprove all requests for bank leave. The employee may appeal a decision regarding the catastrophic leave bank in accordance with DGBA Local.

An initial award of leave bank hours up to the equivalent of 30 workdays may be granted for each separate catastrophic

illness or injury. If a member fails to recover within the first 30 days, the member may apply for additional bank leave to be considered by the committee. No member shall be eligible for more leave bank hours than the equivalent of 60 workdays for one or more catastrophic illness or injuries during a bank year. Additionally, no member shall be awarded more leave bank hours than the equivalent of 60 workdays over one of more bank years for the same catastrophic illness or injury.

For more information about the Catastrophic Leave Bank, employees may contact the Human Resources office at 903-794-8473, ext. 1009, or request a copy of the Administrative Regulations regarding this policy.

Family and Medical Leave (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 work weeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for:

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

An eligible employee who is the spouse, child parent or next of kin of a covered service member 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 service member. 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 block 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 the employer for at least 12 months;
- You have at least 1,250 hours of service for your employer during the 12 months before taking 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 work weeks in the current or previous calendar year
 - You work for an elementary or public or private secondary school, or
 - You work for a public agency, such as a local, state, or federal government agency. Most federal employees are covered by Title II of the FMLA, administered by the Office of Personnel Management.

How do I Request FMLA Leave?

Generally, to request FMLA leave you must:

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

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

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

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

State employees may be subject to certain limitations in pursuit of direct lawsuits regarding leave for their own serious health conditions. Most federal and certain congressional employees are also covered by the law but are subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Post 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 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 may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave. For purposes of an employee's entitlement to FMLA leave, the 12 month period shall begin on the first duty day of the school year.

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

Requests for FMLA: When the need for family and medical leave is foreseeable, employees must provide 30- day advance notice of their need to the district. When the need for leave is not foreseeable, employees must contact the Human Resources Office and their immediate supervisor as soon as possible. Employees may be required to provide the following:

- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting the employee or an immediate family member
- Second or third medical opinions and periodic re-certification of the need for leave
- Periodic reports during the leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work
- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider at the conclusion of leave of an employee's ability to return to work
- Certification of the need for family military leave

Fitness for Duty: An employee that takes Family Medical Leave 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 healthcare 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 Family Medical Leave, 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 Family Medical Leave 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 Family Medical Leave, 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 Family Medical Leave 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 requiring family and medical leave should contact Human Resource at 903-794-8473, ext. 1009 for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Temporary Disability Leave

Certified Employees. Any full-time employee whose position requires certification from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) is eligible for temporary disability leave. The purpose of temporary disability leave is to provide job protection to full-time educators who cannot work for an extended period of time because of a mental or physical disability of a temporary nature. Temporary disability leave must be taken as a continuous block of time. It may not be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule. Pregnancy and conditions related to pregnancy are treated the same as any other temporary disability.

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

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

When an employee is ready to return to work, the Human Resources Department should be notified at least 30 days in advance when possible. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able 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 employees will be reinstated to a position at the original campus at the beginning of the following school year.

NOTE: Temporary disability leave only applies in the case of an employee's personal need for leave, not for family members of the employee.

Extended Illness Leave

Any full-time professional noncontract employee, classified employee, auxiliary employee, or permanent part-time employee shall be eligible for unpaid extended illness leave, if eligible for FMLA, after the expiration of all available paid leave when the employee's condition interferes with the performance of regular duties. The maximum length of unpaid personal illness leave shall be 180 calendar days. This leave is unpaid extended illness leave and shall run concurrently with all other types of leave, including family and medical leave.

Each application for such extended illness leave must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent or designee and must include the district's medical certification form.

Workers' Compensation Benefits

An employee absent from duty because of a job-related injury or illness shall be assigned to family and medical leave, if applicable, and 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 instead. 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 pre-injury wage. If the use of paid leave is not elected, then the employee will only receive worker's compensation wage benefits for any absence resulting from a work-related illness or injury, which may not equal his or her pre-illness or pre-injury wage. The employee shall inform the Human Resources office whether he or she chooses to use available paid leave.

Assault Leave

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to anyone who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An incident involving assault is a work-related injury, and should be immediately reported to the Executive Director of Human Resources in the Human Resources 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 non-responsible for purposes of criminal liability.

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

Bereavement Leave (Family Death)

Funeral leave requires the use of state leave and/or local leave for death in the immediate family and it shall not exceed leave equivalent to five workdays per occurrence, subject to the approval of the district. An employee absent due to a funeral in the immediate family should submit documentation to their supervisor.

Jury Duty

(Policies DEC, DG)

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

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

Compliance with a Subpoena

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

Truancy Court Appearances

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

Religious Observance

The district will reasonably accommodate an employee's request for absence for a religious holiday or observance. Accommodations, such as changes to work schedules or approving a day of absence, will be made unless they pose an undue hardship to the district. The employee may use any accumulated personal leave for this purpose. Employees who have exhausted applicable paid leave may be granted an unpaid day of absence.

Military Leave

Paid Leave for Military Service. Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, reserves component of the United States Armed Forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized Urban Search and Rescue Team is entitled to 15 days of paid leave per fiscal year when engaged in authorized training or duty orders by proper authority. An additional seven days of leave per fiscal year are available if called to state active duty in response to a disaster. In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during active military service.

Reemployment after Military Leave. Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. Employees returning to work following military leave should contact the Human Resources office. 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 Human Resources, at (903)794-8473, ext. 1009 for details on eligibility, requirements and limitations.

Mental Health Leave for Peace Officers and Licensed Telecommunicators

A District peace officer or a full-time District telecommunicator, as defined by law, who experiences a traumatic event in the scope of employment shall be granted a maximum of five 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 an eligible employee 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.

Contact the Human Resources department for more details at 903-794-8473, ext. 1009.

Quarantine Leave for Police 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.

Contact the Human Resources department for more details at 903-794-8473, ext. 1009.

Leave for Police Officers for Illness or Injury

Following a leave of absence with full pay as required by law, the district shall extend the leave of absence for a police officer's line of duty illness or injury in accordance with medical certification and administrative regulations. The extended leave of absence shall not exceed 222 workdays. The extended leave of absence shall be taken with no loss of pay. In accordance with law, following an extended leave of absence the police officer may use accumulated leave.

Payment for Accumulated Leave upon Separation

Local leave remains in the district where earned and does not transfer to other Districts. Local leave is payable upon retirement from TISD at the rate of \$50 per day for professional employees and \$30 per day for nonprofessional employees.

Expiration of Available Leave

Upon the expiration of all leave for which an employee has applied and is eligible, if the employee has not already returned to work, the district shall notify the employee in writing that his or her leave has expired.

The employee has **ten** calendar days within which to apply for any leave for which the employee may be eligible or to notify the district in writing that the employee is ready, willing and able to return to work. A medical clearance showing that the employee is physically able to perform the essential functions of his or her position, with reasonable accommodations, if necessary, is required to return to work. Additionally, some jobs may require the employee to submit to a District-paid fitness-for-duty evaluation wherein the employee must demonstrate the ability to meet all the essential physical requirements of his or her job.

Docking Pay

Hourly employees paid on an accrued schedule that have exhausted all available leave shall have their pay reduced monthly if their time is short of schedule and no leave is available.

Exempt employee's pay will be reduced in whole-day or half-day increments for absences that occur on a scheduled work day after all paid leave benefits have been exhausted. Nonexempt employees will be docked on the basis of their regular hourly wage rate. For docking purposes, annual salaries of exempt employees will be converted to daily increments on the basis of all compensable time during the salary period.

For pre-approved medical leave, absence docks may be scheduled over a period ranging from one to six months during and following the absence(s). For all other absences, the total dock will be scheduled in the month immediately following the absence(s). Regardless of the docking schedule, when an employee leaves employment with the district for any reason, the total dock balance will be deducted from the final paycheck.

Working While on Leave

While on any type of leave status with the district, the employee may not perform work in any capacity; unless it is part of a return-to-work or transitional duty assignment with the district. Exceptions may be granted by the Superintendent or designee. Working during a leave of absence shall be considered a violation of the district's leave policy and may be grounds for immediate termination of at-will employees or recommendation of termination for contract employees.

Frequent or Prolonged Absence

All absences in excess of eight workdays annually shall be investigated by the immediate supervisor who shall take appropriate action as required by district guidelines. The supervisor shall report all absences in excess of eight days in a school year to the Superintendent or designee, who shall take whatever action is deemed necessary. Employees are required to notify their supervisor, in advance, of absences and by the specific procedures of notification outlined by their supervisor. Failure to have absences pre-approved may subject the employee to disciplinary action.

An employee working in a position that requires use of the district's automated online and/or telephonic absence reporting system must use the system to report all absences if so required.

An employee absent more than five consecutive workdays because of personal illness shall submit a medical certification of illness and of his or her fitness to return to work. An employee absent more than three consecutive workdays because of illness in the immediate family shall present medical certification of the family member's illness.

Sanctions for Abuse

Paid leave is provided for the specific purpose stipulated in this policy. It is not intended to be used as a vacation, or for mere convenience. Except for discretionary state personal leave, documentation may be required for any absence at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee. Abuse of the employee leave program is a violation of District policy and may result in disciplinary action up to and including loss of pay, suspension, demotion, or termination of employment, in accordance with appropriate District policies. [See Policies DCD and DF series]

Failure to call in and follow proper procedures in requesting and/or notifying supervisors of an absence from work may result in the determination of job abandonment and may be a terminating offense.

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, District communications and through special events and activities. The district honors employees for their dedicated years of service as well as recognizing Teacher of the Year awards.

District Communications

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

Community Relations

Texarkana ISD is committed to working with the Texarkana community to enhance the education of our students. The Partners in Education (PIE) program is designed to enhance educational experiences of students by developing cooperative relationships among businesses, parents, community members and the school District.

The PIE program consists of donations from businesses and individuals as well as volunteers working daily in our schools. It is essential that all TISD employees welcome the volunteers, utilize their skills and value their service to our students. Employees should follow all procedures that pertain to volunteers for the safety and security of our students.

Complaints and Grievances

(Policy DBGA)

In an effort to hear and resolve employee 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 problems or complaints with their supervisors or an appropriate administrator at any time.

The formal grievance 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 grievance procedures are exhausted, employees can bring concerns or complaints to the Board of Trustees. For more information or for grievance forms, please contact the Human Resources department at 903-794-8473, ext. 1012. For ease of reference, the district's policy concerning the process of bringing concerns and complaints may be accessed online at <https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=206&code=DGBA#legalTabContent>.

Employee Conduct and Welfare

Standards of Conduct

(Policies DH, DHA)

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 co-workers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor as early as possible (preferably in advance) in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness and failure to follow procedures for reporting any absence may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- Know and comply with department and District procedures and policies.
- 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 policy, and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines, including intentionally making a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC by the Superintendent. See *Reports to the Texas Education Agency* 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

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

I. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 1.14 The educator shall comply with the prohibitions on diversity, equity, and inclusion duties in Texas Education Code (TEC), §11.005.

Standard 1.15 The educator shall comply with the prohibitions on assistance with social transitioning in TEC, §11.401.

Standard 1.16 The educator shall comply with the restrictions on instruction regarding sexual orientation and gender identity in TEC, §28.0043.

Standard 1.17 The educator shall comply with the requirements to provide full information to a parent concerning a parent in TEC, §26.008.

Standard 1.18 The educator shall not promote, advocate, or encourage, in a manner that is reasonably accessible or visible to students, illegal conduct:

- (i) describe by TEC, §22A.201(a); or
- (ii) directly related to student behavior or school property.

2. Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 2.6 The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

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

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

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 3.8 The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard. Factors that may be considered in context and on the totality of the circumstances in assessing whether appropriate boundaries were maintained include, but are not limited to:

- (i) physical proximity or physical contact beyond the professional role or that the student has indicated is unwelcome, unless such contact is professionally required;
- (ii) contacting or meeting the student beyond the professional role or making efforts to gain access to or time alone with a student with no discernible professional purpose;
- (iii) transporting the student without permission from the student's legal guardian or in violation of school board policy, unless for an emergency;
- (iv) taking or possessing a photo or video of the student beyond the professional role or in violation of school board policy; and
- (v) showing favoritism or isolation through gifts, rewards, or privileges.

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 context and on the totality of the circumstances in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

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

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

(Policies DH, DIA)

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

Individuals who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against or harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor or other 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 of Trustees.

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 may be accessed on the district website at <https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=206&code=DIA#legalTabContent>.

Harassment of Students

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

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

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

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

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct and any person who believes that a student has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, school counselor, principal, other District employee, or the appropriate District official listed in this policy. Any District employee who suspects or receives direct or indirect notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed in policy and take any other steps required by policy.

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 proved, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy. If so, the district shall immediately undertake an investigation, except in the case that a criminal investigation takes precedence over a district investigation.

In the case of a report of bullying, absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.

In the case of a formal Title IX complaint or allegation, the investigation will follow legal guidelines outlined in Policy FFH.

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 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 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 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.

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

Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children

(Policy FFG)

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed through each campus counselor. 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 continuous sexual abuse of a young 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 has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting suspected abuse or neglect following the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

Employees are required to follow 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 not later than the **seventh business day** after termination or resignation or notice from the principal:

- 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 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, CQD)

The district's technology resources, including its networks, computer systems, email accounts, devices connected to its networks, and all district-owned devices used on or off school property, are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

- Imposes no tangible cost to the district.
- Does not unduly burden the district's technology resources.
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance.
- 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 use of the technology resources are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use.

Employees are required to abide by the provisions of the district's acceptable use agreement and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the district's Information Technology Department.

Acceptable Use Policy

The following information is from the TISD Acceptable Use Policy, which details the guidelines for use of district hardware, software, network, and electronic communications. The document in its entirety is available on the district website www.txkisd.net.

This policy applies to anyone who uses Texarkana Independent School District technology resources. Technology resources include all District owned, licensed, or managed hardware and software as well as the use of the district network via a physical or wireless connection, regardless of the ownership of the computer or device connected to the network.

Definitions

The district's computer systems and networks include but are not limited to the following:

- Computer hardware and peripherals
- Servers
- Email
- Databases
- Software including operating system software and application software
- Externally accessed data including the Internet
- Network Storage
- Digitized information including stored tests, data files, email, digital images, and video and audio files
- District provided Internet access
- District provided public Wi-Fi
- New technologies as they become available

Policy

Acceptable Use

The district's technology resources will be used for learning, teaching, and administrative purposes consistent with the district's mission and goals.

Improper Use Includes:

- Submitting, publishing or displaying any defamatory, cyberbullying, inaccurate, racially offensive, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually-oriented, or threatening materials or messages either public or private;
- Attempting to or physically damaging equipment, materials or data;
- Attempting to or sending anonymous messages of any kind, except as expressly allowed by the District's Elevate system;

- Pretending to be someone else when sending/receiving messages;
- Using District resources for personal and commercial use;
- Using the network to access inappropriate material;
- Knowingly placing a computer virus on a computer or the network;
- Opening email messages from unknown senders, loading data from unprotected computers, and any other risky action that may introduce viruses to the system;
- Accessing technology resources, files, and documents of another user without authorization;
- Attempting to or using proxy servers or otherwise bypassing security to gain access to the Internet or network resources;
- Posting personal information about others without proper authorization;
- Attempting to “hack” into technology resources;
- Storing non-work-related information (i.e. programs,.exe files, non-work-related videos) on the district’s storage systems;
- Attempts to degrade or disrupt resource performance including but not limited to denial-of-service attacks;
- Any interference with the work of others, with or without malicious intent;
- Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic messages or data;
- Violation of copyright laws; Installing software without proper approval;
- Installing or setting up any device that would alter the network topology including wireless access points, routers, hubs, or switches;
- Inappropriate desktop backgrounds and screensavers;
- Attempting to gain unauthorized access to third party networks or systems through the use of District resources;
- Giving your Password or Account Access to anyone - including your own family;
- Setting up a Wi-Fi Hotspot in order to circumvent district wireless settings to bypass the district internet filtering.

Network Access

Access to the District’s network systems will be governed as follows:

- Your user account is your own. Do not share your username or password, even with other staff or students.
- You are required to keep your password confidential. It is important to remember that your password allows access to multiple systems, and many of those systems contain FERPA protected information.
- Make sure not to store any passwords in easily accessed locations.
- Do not allow another person to use your account to access Texarkana ISD wireless networks or to log into desktops.
- Any system user identified as a security risk or having violated the Technology Acceptable Use Policy may have their access privileges revoked to the district’s system. Other consequences may also be administered.
- You are responsible for all actions taken by your user account.
- The system may not be used for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any other activity prohibited by District guidelines.
- For information on accessing the Texarkana ISD wireless network consult the: [Texarkana ISD - Wireless Network Reference](#)

Suspension or Termination of a Network User Account

The district may suspend or terminate a user’s access to the district’s system upon suspected violation of District policy and/or administrative regulations regarding acceptable use. A user’s account will always be disabled once they leave the district’s employment.

Data Security

As part of your duties, you may have access to confidential information. Caution must be taken to ensure this data is not exposed to those without a need to know. A data file containing confidential information that is released can damage the financial or professional futures of others, thus this information must be handled appropriately.

- Limit data exports to only the necessary information on the required people.

- Do not leave data files or computer equipment in an unsecured location such as an unattended automobile.
- Employees are required to ensure that all sensitive/confidential information in hardcopy or electronic form is secure in their work area at the end of the day and when they are expected to be gone from their office. This information should be kept in a locked drawer when the desk is unoccupied.
- Printouts containing confidential information should be immediately removed from the printer. Upon disposal, confidential information should be shredded using District shredders.
- Whiteboards, etc. containing sensitive information should be erased after use.
- Lock up portable computing devices including laptops, external drives, and flash drives.
- Access to confidential information should be given on an as-needed basis. If you are able to access confidential information that you do not need, you are required to report it to the manager of that data system.
- Be very cautious in transporting data files. Data transported on flash drives or external drives can be lost easily.
- Cloud-based storage systems like Google Drive are susceptible to leaks especially if users do not correctly configure sharing permissions. Staff should keep in mind what data should be kept confidential when sharing any files or folders with contacts outside the district.
- Confidential information sent via Gmail should always have confidential mode enabled. This feature should be used for all confidential email, including internal District communication.
- Data files containing confidential information that are leaving the district via email or on media should be encrypted (contact the Technology Department for assistance).

Personal Use of Electronic Communications

(Policies CQ, CY, DHA)

Electronic communications include all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (email), web logs (blogs), wikis, electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (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, logos, 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))
- Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private email addresses. (See Policy GBA)
- Copyright law (See Policy CY)
- Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system. (See DHA(LEGAL))

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

Electronic Communications between Employees, Students, and Parents

(Policy DH)

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

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

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

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

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

- *Electronic communications* mean any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes email, text messages, instant messages, and any communication made through an Internet website, including a social media website or a social networking website.
- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*; however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Communications*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.
- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, 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:
 - The employee shall include at least one of the student's parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message;
 - The employee shall include his or her immediate supervisor as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and supervisor receive the same message; or
 - 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 and respective supervisor.
- 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). Employees should exercise caution, sound judgment, and common sense in respect to the appropriate times for communication.
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must utilize a district-approved social network page for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration to access the employee's page if electronically communicating with a student. Any page used to communicate with students must be approved by the Superintendent or designee.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communication with students and parents and may be monitored at the district's discretion.
- 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. (See *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.
- 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

(*Policies DH, GB*)

Employees should not maintain district information on privately owned devices. Any district information must be forwarded or transferred to the district to be preserved. The district will take reasonable efforts to obtain public information in compliance with the Public Information Act. Reasonable efforts may include:

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

Criminal History Background Checks

(Policy DBAA)

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

(Policies 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 as follows:

- Crimes involving school property or funds
- 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
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity
- Crimes involving moral turpitude

Moral turpitude includes the following:

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

If an 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. See Board policies DHB(LEGAL) and DHC(LEGAL) for timelines and conduct that will result in reporting.

Alcohol and Drug - Abuse Prevention

(Policy DH)

Texarkana 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. 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 can be located on the district website at <http://www.txkisd.net> under Board policy DH (Local).

Tobacco and Nicotine Products and E-Cigarette Use

(Policies DH, FNCD, GKA)

State law prohibits smoking, using, or possessing 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 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 it 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 state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by 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

(Policies CB, DBD)

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

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

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

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

Safety and Security

(Policy CK series)

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

- 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 office of Risk Management at 903-792-7991.

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 supervisors or call the TISD Police at 903-793-1965 immediately.

Visitors in the Workplace

(Policy GKC)

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

Asbestos Management Plan

(Policy CSC)

The district is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each piece of District property. A copy of the district's management plan is kept in the central administration 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 an area of common access. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests an individualized notice will be notified by telephone, written, or electronic means. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

Employee Identification Badges

Employee identification badges are to be worn by employees at all times while on any campus of Texarkana ISD to promote safety and improve employee relations. Employees should keep badges in safekeeping and report any lost or stolen badge to the campus principal or supervisor.

Employee badges are issued by the TISD Human Resources office at 2208 Kennedy Lane.

Upon separation from employment with TISD, employee badges are to be returned to the employee's supervisor.

Employee Dress Code

Texarkana ISD recognizes that professional attire helps set the tone of an educational system. Professional appearance helps reflect the finest traditions of the teaching profession by establishing a sense of trust and confidence within our community. Professional appearance should enhance the primary goal of student learning and achievement. Employees' attire should at all times be distinguishable from students' attire. Staff should at all times be aware of the example being set for students, parents and the public, with particular emphasis on modesty, appropriateness, and neatness of dress. Employees are expected to adhere to the dress code outlined in the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, as well as the guidelines that follow.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS:

Employees of the District shall:

1. Ensure an appropriate educational environment and refrain from any mode of dress which is not exemplary for students
2. Ensure a healthy school or work environment.
3. Adhere to administrative regulations related to appropriate dress.
4. Observe a standard of grooming and appearance consistent with the level of formality of the school or work situation.

DRESS CODE STANDARDS:

- Some job assignments, such as Coaches, Nurses/Health Aides, and employees working with students who have disabilities and lack the ability to fully care for themselves, may warrant dress different than that appropriate for a normal work assignment. Employees who have questions regarding acceptable dress resulting from their job assignment should consult their supervisor or the Human Resources Department.
- All District employees should dress in an appropriate manner. During the workday and anytime employees attend work-related activities, employees shall exhibit professional appearance. Basic elements for appropriate and professional business attire include clothing that is in neat and clean condition. Appropriate workplace dress does not include clothing that is too tight or revealing; clothing with rips, tears or frays; or any extreme style or fashion in dress, footwear, accessories or fragrances.
- Leggings are only acceptable with an appropriate top that extends to 4 inches above the knee. Jogging or bike shorts are not allowed. District approved shorts may be worn in PE class or athletics.
- Hair should be clean, neatly groomed and in keeping with professional decorum. Hairstyles which pose safety hazards in certain classes may require the hair to be secured in such a manner as to create the least potential problem.
- Pierced jewelry may be worn in the ears and nose. Only a single small stud may be worn in the nose. No rings in the nose are allowed. Clear spacers in nose piercings are permitted. Jewelry worn on the job must be conservative, in good taste, appropriate for the workplace, and not in conflict with job-related safety standards.
- Exposed obscene tattoos or body drawings are not permitted.
- The Principal or Supervisor shall be responsible for enforcing the standards of professional appearance based on his/her evaluation of the impact an individual's appearance has upon the school/department climate, educational/work process, or the school/department's image in the district and community. The Principal/Supervisor shall be the final judge as to the appropriateness of wearing apparel.

Employees who have specific questions about the acceptability or appropriateness of a garment or item should first consult their supervisor and may also consult the Human Resources Department.

General Procedures

Emergency School Closing

(Policy EB)

The district may close schools for a full day or part of a day because of severe weather, epidemics, or other emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late, to release students early, or to cancel school, District officials will post a notice on the district website and notify the local radio and television stations. Notification will also go out to active employees through our electronic calling system to notify staff members and parents of school closings.

Emergencies

(Policies CKC, CKD)

All employees should be familiar with the safety procedures for responding to 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 through the SKYWARD System. 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 at 903-794-3651 for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees should notify the Human Resources office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. Name changes will not be processed without proof of an updated Social Security Card presented in the Human Resources office. Forms to process a change in personal information can be accessed in the electronic Records System or by calling Human Resources at 903-794-8473, ext. 1012.

Personnel Records

(Policies DBA, GBA)

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

Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

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

The choice to not allow public access to this information or change an existing choice may be made at any time. Employees may choose not to allow public access to or have the information included in a staff directory by submitting a written request to the Human Resources office. New or terminated employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information may be released to the public until a request to withhold the information is submitted or another exception for release of information under by 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. Facilities use applications are available on the District's Web site at https://www.facilitron.com/tisd75503?tab=child_owners .

Termination of Employment

Resignations

(Policies DFE, DHB)

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

Contract employees may not resign during the school year, after active duty has begun, without the consent of the Superintendent or the Board. Acceptance of a resignation after the deadline established by law is contingent on finding a suitable replacement. Resignation without the consent of the Board 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.

Non-contract employees: Non-contract employees may resign their positions at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to their immediate supervisor and the Human Resources Department 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
- Was involved in or solicited a romantic relationship with a student or minor
- Engaged in inappropriate communications with a student or minor
- Failed to maintain appropriate boundaries with a student or minor

The Superintendent is required to report such conduct to TEA.

Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

(Policy DF Series, DHB, DPA, DPB)

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts may be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in District policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be non-renewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The timelines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or non-renewal 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 the employee's certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the timelines and procedures can be found in the DF series policies that are provided to employees or are available online.

Dismissal of Noncontract Employees

(Policies DCD, DHC, DPA, DPB)

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

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:

- 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 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 engaging 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 Interviews and Procedures

Exit interviews may be scheduled for all employees leaving the district. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the district with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the district with feedback on their employment experience. All District keys, books, property, including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment. The final payroll check may not be distributed until all equipment and property is returned to the district.

Upon resignation or termination date, access to all Google and district accounts will be suspended. Please access any pertinent personal information prior to the resignation/termination date.

Final Paycheck Procedures

The Human Resources and Payroll offices calculate all final paycheck amounts based upon actual hours and days worked prior to termination. For separation from employment mid-year, final paychecks will be issued on the next regular payroll following the last day of work. For ten- or eleven-month salaried employees working until the end of the year, paychecks will continue through the last scheduled pay date of the contract period.

After submitting a resignation letter, employees must continue to follow District absence policies until the last date of work. Any leave taken, but not earned, will be deducted from the final paycheck. Leave balances on final paychecks will be calculated as follows:

- **State leave** – Balance is adjusted for days worked and documented on the employee's service record.
 - These days remain in the state where earned and may transfer to other Districts but are not payable to the employee.
- **Local leave** – Balance is adjusted for days worked.
 - This leave remains in the district where earned, does not transfer to other Districts and is payable upon retirement from TISD at the rate of \$50 per day for professional employees and \$30 per day for nonprofessional employees.
- **Non-Duty leave** – 222-day employees must work through June 30th to earn all non-duty leave possible for the year. This balance will be adjusted and other leave used in place of any non-duty leave used if the employee leaves their position prior to June 30th.
- **Vacation leave** – 261-day employees with vacation leave balances will receive pay based on their hourly rate of pay for unused earned vacation leave up to a maximum of the equivalent of 30 workdays on their final check.

Certified Employees. The dismissal of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA whenever the termination is based on 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 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 property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation
- Committing a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on District property or at a school-sponsored event

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

Noncertified Employees. The voluntary or involuntary separation of a noncertified employee from the District must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA by 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. Notice of the following must be sent to the court and support recipient:

- 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, Texarkana Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students based on sex, including sexual harassment, should be directed to the District Title IX Coordinator: Kay Stickels, Executive Director of Human Resources, at 903-794-8473, ext. 2556. Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to Anne Slade, the District ADA/Section 504 coordinator for students at (903) 793-7561 ext. 1336. All other questions or concerns related 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 Student Enrollment Office at the TISD Welcome Center for assistance.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) defines education records as any records, documents, files, or other material containing personally identifiable information about students, that are maintained by a school District or by someone on behalf of a school District (See *Board Policy FL (LEGAL)*). Some information about students is "directory information" and is available upon request by any person, unless a parent has asked that it not be released. Other types of records can only be released with a parent's express permission. Material containing personally identifiable information about students should not be sent over the Internet or by email either in the body of electronic messages or as enclosures or attachments to the messages.

Email messages about a student or employee may be accessible -- to the extent that FERPA allows -- through an open records request in accordance with the Public Information Act (formerly called the "Texas Open Records Act"), if the messages have been retained or are retrievable in the computer system. Each user should take care not to send or store any message he or she would not want made available to others.

Any student information sent by internet or email is considered public information and, therefore, could be subpoenaed in court. **Therefore, no confidential information about students should be sent over internet or by email unless the written permission of the parent is given.** Materials that are not considered educational records and do not have to be made available to a parent or student include teachers' personal notes on a student.

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.

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. Any campus office or the TISD Administrative office can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint. Contact Melodie White, at 903- 794-3651 for more information on parent complaint procedures.

Administering Medication to Students

(Policies FFAC, FFAF)

Only designated employees may administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. Exceptions apply to the administration of asthma medication for respiratory distress, medication for anaphylaxis (e.g., EpiPen®), opioid antagonists, and medication for diabetes management, if the medication is self-administered in accordance with District policy and procedures. A student who must take any other medicine 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 FN series and FO series)

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook. 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 follow the procedures outlined by the campus for parental consent and documenting student absences. 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 the campus administrator. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and is reprinted below.

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

1. Means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that satisfies the applicability requirements below and that:
 - a. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
 - b. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
 - c. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
 - d. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school; and
2. Includes cyberbullying.

Bullying of a student could occur by physical contact or through electronic means and may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and is available on the district's website at www.txkisd.net and at each campus location.

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, which 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.

District Policies

The complete TISD Board Policies can be accessed and viewed through the Internet. This online service can be accessed through the TISD Web site at <http://www.txkisd.net>.

The following policies have been summarized for easy reference. If you need a hard copy of these policies, please contact Human Resources at 903-794-8473, ext. 1012.

CO – Food & Nutrition Management (Child Nutrition Employees)

DAA Series – Equal employment opportunity
and genetic nondiscrimination

DBAA – Criminal history and credit reports

DBD – Conflict of interest

DC Series – Employment practices

DCB – Term Contracts

DEA Series – Salaries and wages; incentives and stipends

DEC series – Leaves and absences

DF – Termination of employment

DFA Series – Termination of, or return to, probationary contract

DFB Series – Termination of term contracts

DFD – Hearings before hearing examiner

DFE – Resignations

DFF Series – Reduction in force

DG – Employee rights and privileges

DGBA - Employee complaints

DH Series – Employee standards of conduct,
Educator Code of Ethics, SBEC reporting, TEA
reporting

DHE – Searches and drug/alcohol testing

DI – Employee welfare

DIA – Freedom from Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation

DK – Assignments and schedules

DN Series – Performance appraisal

DP Series – Personnel Positions

FFG – Student Welfare: Child Abuse and Neglect

FFH (Local) – Student Welfare: Freedom from Harassment

FN – Students' Rights and Responsibilities

FO – Student Discipline



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