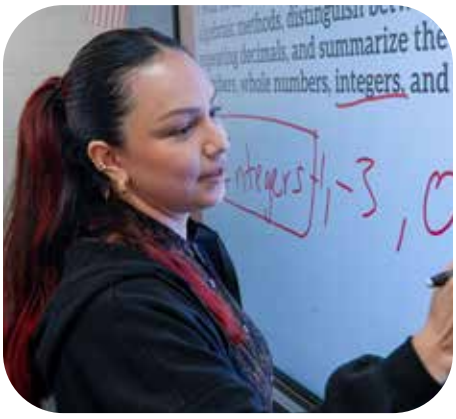
Fort Worth
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT











2026-2027

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of a disability, contact:

emp.services@fwisd.org | 817.814.1830

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Fort Worth INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dr. Peter B. Licata, Superintendent
FORT WORTH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
7060 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth, TX 76116
817.814.1950 superintendent@fwisd.org

BOARD OF MANAGERS
Pete Geren, *President*
Courtney Lewis, *Vice President*
Rosa Maria Berdeja, *Secretary*
Bobby Ahdieh
Luis A. Galindo
Laurie George
Frost Prioleau
Jay Stegall
Tennessee Walker

Fall 2026

Dear Fort Worth ISD Team Member:

Welcome to a new school year. As members of the Fort Worth ISD team, we share a unified mission: preparing every student for success in college, career, and leadership within their communities. Our strategic plan provides the direction we follow, ensuring that our daily work stays aligned with that mission. Dr. Licata's Theory of Action includes these 5 pillars:

1) Excellent Academic Performance for all Students
2) Excellent Instruction Delivering High-Quality and Focused Curriculum
3) Excellent Talent, Incentivized to Empower Students
4) Excellent CCMR Pathways for Graduates
5) Excellent Service to Students, Families, and Staff

Most importantly, these priorities reflect our commitment to putting students first in every decision we make.

The Employee Handbook serves as your primary reference for understanding Fort Worth ISD's policies, procedures, and expectations. Please take the time to read it thoroughly and become familiar with all sections. If anything is unclear or you need additional support, feel free to contact Employee Services.

Phone: 817-814-1830
Email: Emp.Services@fwisd.org

We strive to uphold a culture grounded in high expectations, accountability, and integrity for every student and staff member. Thank you for being part of the Fort Worth ISD community and for your dedication to placing students at the center of everything we do.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peter B. Licata
Superintendent
Fort Worth Independent School District

Board of Education

Pete Geren..... Board President

Courtney Lewis..... 1st Vice President

Rosa Maria Berdeja..... Board Secretary

Bobby Ahdieh..... Member

Luis A. Galindo..... Member

Laurie George..... Member

Frost Prioleau..... Member

Jay Stegall..... Member

Tennessee Walker..... Member

Dr. Peter Licata, Superintendent of Schools

FWISD EXECUTIVE CABINET

Dr. Daniel Soliz
Deputy Superintendent
Chief of Schools

Dr. Louis Kushner
Chief of Staff

Dr. Lisa Inzar
Special Assistant to the Superintendent

Mohammed Choudhury
Deputy Superintendent
Curriculum and Instruction

Evan Anderson
Senior Executive Director of Communications & Community Partnerships

Kellie Spencer
Deputy Superintendent
District Operations

Dr. Eric Upchurch
Chief Technology Officer

Denisha Presley
Chief Talent Officer

Darla Moss
Chief Financial Officer

Sid Pounds
General Counsel

Introduction

This handbook intends to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year with FWISD. Not all District policies and procedures are included. Those that are, have been summarized. If you have difficulty accessing information in this handbook because of a disability or have suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook, please contact the Office of Employee Services via email at Emp.Services@fwisd.org or call 817- 814-1830.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official District policy manual, nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of noncontract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to, and a brief explanation of, District policies and procedures related to employment. **These policies and procedures can change at any time**. Changes to District policy and procedures shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the Fort Worth ISD Board Policy Manual for specific Policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate District staff who facilitate that policy's management.

District Information

The Fort Worth ISD is a multi-ethnic, urban school district with approximately 70,903 students and 9,860 employees. The District has 115 campuses that serve all levels from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, including special populations.

Mission Statement and Goals

Policy AE

Mission Statement:

Preparing all students for success in college, career, and community leadership.

District Priorities:

On April 18, 2026, Dr. Peter B. Licata, Superintendent, announced the District's Five (5) Pillars of Excellence which focuses on students' success across Fort Worth ISD.

Pillar 1: Excellent Academic Performance for All Students
Pillar 2: Excellent Instruction Delivering High-Quality and Focused Curriculum
Pillar 3: Excellent Talent, Incentivized to Empower Students
Pillar 4: Excellent CCMR Pathways for Graduates
Pillar 5: Excellent Service to Students, Families, and Staff

Board of Managers

Policies BAA, BB series, BD series, and BE series

TEA Intervention

Fort Worth ISD is currently operating under a leadership transition directed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). This includes the appointment of a Board of Managers and Superintendent Dr. Peter Licata to support improved student outcomes and long-term district stability. While governance has temporarily shifted, the day-to-day focus remains unchanged: delivering a high-quality education for every student. Fort Worth ISD is currently led by Superintendent Dr. Peter Licata and a TEA-appointed Board of Managers.

Board of Managers (TEA-appointed)

- Pete Geren
- Courtney Lewis
- Rosa Marie Berdeja
- Bobby Ahdieh
- Luis A. Galindo
- Laurie George
- Frost Prioleau
- Jay Stegall
- Tennessee Walker

The Board usually meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. Unless otherwise provided in the notice for a meeting, Board meetings shall be held at the District Service Center, 7060 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76116. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the District's Board of Education website at least three (3) 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 one-hour notice.

All meetings are open to the public and are broadcast on designated websites when the public may not attend due to county and District health restrictions. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the Board to convene in a closed session from which the public and others are excluded for reasons allowable under the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Board of Managers Meeting Schedule

2026-2027 MEETING/WORKSHOP DATES	
Tuesday, August 11, 2026	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 8, 2026	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, October 13, 2026	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, October 27, 2026	Quarterly Workshop
Tuesday, November 10, 2026	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, December 8, 2026	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 12, 2027	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Quarterly Workshop
Tuesday, February 9, 2027	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 9, 2027	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 13, 2027	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 27, 2027	Quarterly Workshop
Tuesday, May 11, 2027	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, June 8, 2027	Budget Workshop
Tuesday, June 22, 2027	Regular Meeting
Tuesday, July 13, 2027	Regular Meeting

School Calendar

The District website has school calendars for the 2026-2027 school year based on its specialized academic programs as follows:

- Traditional School Calendar;
- ALC and Jo Kelly School Calendar; and
- Early College High School Calendar.

Helpful Contacts

From time to time, employees have questions or concerns. If those questions or concerns cannot be addressed by supervisors or at the campus/department level, the employee is encouraged to contact the appropriate department as listed through the District's Directories website.

School Directory

Contact information regarding all District schools may be accessed at the District's website.

Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity

Policies DAA, DIA

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

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not discriminate on the basis of sex and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may 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: Monica Corona-Hunter, Title IX Coordinator, 7060 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76116; email: TitleIX@fwisd.org; or phone: 817-814-1830.

The District designates and authorizes the following employee as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator for employees with concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: Dr. Carolyn Smythe, 504 Coordinator, 7060 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76116; email:

Carolyn.Smythe@fwisd.org; or phone: 817-814-2878.

Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, email, or phone. During District business hours, reports may also be made in person. Questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any other reason should be directed to the Superintendent.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

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 an undue hardship or if the accommodation poses a direct threat to the health or safety of the employee or others. An employee or their supervisor may initiate a request for accommodation by contacting Leaves@fwisd.org and identifying an adjustment or change at work that is needed because of a disability. An employee may also submit a written request to the Leaves and ADA Management-Benefits Office using the ADA Accommodation Request Form, which is available in the Benefits Department website.

Upon receiving the reasonable accommodation request, Leaves and ADA Management staff will contact the employee to clarify or request additional information, if needed, and the employee's supervisor to review the next steps in the interactive process. The District may request medical information concerning the employee's disability and assist in determining what accommodation(s) may be available and appropriate. The employee will be responsible for obtaining information from their health care provider. Medical information received will be confidential and kept separate from the employee's personnel file.

After contacting the employee and their supervisor and collecting the necessary medical documentation, the District's ADA Accommodations Committee will review the employees request, determine whether the employee is a qualified individual with a disability and develop a reasonable accommodation plan for the employee. Accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The Leaves and ADA Management-Benefits Office will work closely with the employee and supervisor to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided and effective.

Policy DAA, DIA

The District does not discriminate against any qualified individual on the basis of a disability in job application procedures, hiring, advancement, or discharge of employees, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. *42 U.S.C. 12112(a); 29 C.F.R. 1630.4; Labor Code 21.051*

Job Vacancy Announcements

Policy DC

Job vacancies are posted at the Talent Management website and may be accessed by a personal computer or using computers located in the lobby of the Talent Management Department at the FWISD District Service Center, 7060 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76116.

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 of *Employment after Retirement*. Employees can contact TRS for additional information by calling 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. Information is also available on the TRS Website (www.trs.texas.gov).

Contract and Noncontract Employment

Policy DC series

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

Probationary Contracts

(Policy DCA) Nurses and full-time professional employees new to the District and employed in positions requiring Texas educator certification must receive a probationary contract during their first year of employment.

Former employees who are hired after a two (2) 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 for no less than one (1) full year of employment based on the work calendar of the new position.

Probationary contracts are for a term of one school year and may be renewed for two (2) additional one-year periods if the employee has less than five (5) of the preceding eight (8) years of employment under a public-school Chapter 21 contract. Under certain circumstances, the District may elect to recommend and offer a fourth consecutive year of employment under a probationary contract.

New employees who begin their assignment after the first day of instruction will be issued a Chapter 21 probationary contract for that year without credit toward the following school year's contract assignment.

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

Term Contracts
(Policy DCB) Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring Texas educator certification will be employed under Chapter 21 term contracts after they have successfully completed the probationary period. The term contract will not be longer than one (1) year for employees who are completing a Chapter 21 probationary contract with the District. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract. Employment policies can be accessed online, or copies will be provided upon request.

Noncertified Professional and Administrative Employees
Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as non-instructional administrators) are not employed by contract and may be terminated at any time by the District. If allowed by Board policy, the Superintendent may elect to offer these employees a non-Chapter 21 employment contract. Such contracts shall not be for longer than a one-year term.

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 separated at any time by either the employee or the District.

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Personnel in Certain Positions
All paraprofessional and auxiliary personnel such as, but not limited to, teaching assistants that require a Texas Educator Certificate must maintain the Certificate as active in order to be eligible for continued employment in any position that requires such certification. See the specific job description for your assignment or discuss the required TEA certification requirements with your supervisor if there are any questions.

Certification and Licenses
Policies DBA, DF

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or professional license are responsible for taking any necessary actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to the Talent Management Department prior to the expiration of their certification or license. Employees licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR) must notify the Talent Management Department when there is an action against, expiration, or revocation of their license.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without Chapter 21 due process, and employment

terminated through Board action, if the individual does not maintain an active certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or local teaching permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact the Talent Management Department at 817-814-2717 if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

Recertification of Employment Authorization

Policy DC

At the time of hiring, all employees must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) and present original documents to designated District staff to verify identity and employment authorization. Failure to submit acceptable identity and employment authorization documents may result in an employment offer being withdrawn or a delay in a candidate's District-approved first day of employment.

Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization, or employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact the Talent Management Department at 817-814-2717 if you have any questions regarding the re-verification of employment authorization. Failure by current employees to submit required Employment Authorization Documents to the District in a timely manner may result in District action up to and including separation of employment.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

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

Department supervisors, principals, and other administrators, in consultation with the Office of Professional Standards, may remove an employee from duty and require testing for controlled substances and/or alcohol-based upon reasonable suspicion.

Reasonable suspicion includes, but is not limited to:

1. The occurrence of an accident or incident that results in damage or loss of District property or injury to any employee;
2. Observations of appearance, behavior, speech, or body odors;
3. Reports or complaints from other employees or members of the public community about the use of or impairment by alcohol or illegal/controlled substances; or
4. Such observations, reports, or complaints must be immediately prior to, during, or immediately following the suspected employee's work schedule.

Any employee whose conduct violates the District drug, alcohol, and controlled substance prohibitions of this policy shall be recommended for termination for any of the following violations:

1. Refusing or failing to submit to a required test for alcohol or controlled substances;
2. Providing an adulterated, diluted, or substituted specimen on an alcohol or controlled substance test;
3. Testing positive for alcohol at a concentration of 0.02 or greater in a post-accident, random, or reasonable suspicion test; or
4. Testing positive for controlled substances in a post-accident, random, or reasonable suspicion test.

FWISD has established an alcohol/controlled substances testing program primarily designed to prevent accidents and injuries resulting from the misuse of alcohol/controlled substances by District employees who drive District vehicles and school buses as required by federal/state law. Drug testing may be conducted before an individual assumes job duties and is required for certain positions in the District prior to the first day of employment. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted as follows:

1. At random for safety-sensitive positions;
2. When reasonable suspicion of misuse or abuse exists;
3. When an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct;
4. As a follow-up measure;
5. Immediately following accidents;
6. Return-to-duty and follow-up testing will be conducted when an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol/drugs returns to duty;
7. For pre-employment; or
8. When a bus driver has been absent for thirty (30) days or longer, they must be retested.

Failure to follow this policy can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees Required to Have a Commercial Driver's License

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

a commercial motor vehicle.

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted for the following accidents. 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, detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse, and the availability of employee assistance programs.

Employees should be aware that the use of a commercially available CBD product containing even small amounts of THC may create a detectable buildup in a user's body. Therefore, the use of such commercially available products may lead to a positive result for marijuana on urinalysis and other forms of drug testing.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug testing policies and related educational material should contact the Office of Professional Standards at 817-814-1880.

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 Department Director by August 10, 2026, or before the start of student activities.

Nurses, athletic coaches or sponsors, PE teachers, marching band directors, cheerleading coaches, and other certain employees must obtain and maintain certification in the principles and techniques of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) provided by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another authorized organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to the campus coordinator by August 14, 2026, or before the start of student activities.

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the District proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the

American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to Dr. Roina Baquera, Director of Health and Physical Education, annually via email or paper submission. For any questions, contact the Director of Health and Physical Education at 817-814-2598.

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. Therefore, employees may be reassigned or transferred at any time based on the needs 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 of 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 voluntary transfer to another campus or department pursuant to the District's Voluntary Transfer guidelines under Policy DK (LOCAL). A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. An eligible teacher requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit his or her request by the date determined by the District. 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 Talent Management office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

Workload and Work Schedules

Policies DEAB, DK, DL

Professional Employees

Professional employees and academic administrators are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-, 11-, or 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by the District. A school calendar is adopted each year, designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Work calendars are distributed each school year through the District's weekly email, Inside FWISD, and are also available on the District's website.

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 four hundred and fifty (450) minutes within each two (2) week period in blocks of not less than forty-five (45) minutes within the instructional day. Teachers and librarians are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least thirty (30) minutes. The District may require teachers to supervise students during lunch one (1) day a week when no other personnel are available.

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees
Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. (See *Overtime Compensation* on page 25 for additional information)

Teachers Length of Workday—School Assignment
Campus principals will establish employee workday start and end times based on the instructional schedule and operational needs of the campus.

Employees are expected to report for duty and remain on duty during their assigned workday, including before student arrival and after student dismissal, as directed by the campus principal.

Instructional day schedules identify student instructional hours and do not represent employee workday start or end times. Employee workday schedules are established by the campus principal in accordance with district guidelines.

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 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 right to reasonable break time and a private place to express breast milk ends (1) year after the child's birth.

In accordance with Federal Law and Board Policy, the following guidelines are provided to assist supervisors in facilitating lactation accommodations:

- Private room (not a bathroom) with a locking door or signage indicating the space is in use and off limits to others
- Close proximity to employee's work area;
- Privacy from co-workers and public view, free from intrusion;

- Equipped with a chair, an accessible electrical outlet, and a flat surface, other than the floor, on which to place the pump; and
- Access to hygienic nearby storage and clean water source.

Supervisors shall not deny any reasonable lactation accommodation requests prior to consultation with the staff in the Office of Employee Services or Leaves and ADA Management – Benefits Office. The District prohibits discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation against any District employee who chooses to express breast milk for their infant child.

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 ten (10) days to comply with the law before making any claim of liability against the District. An employee with concerns should contact Leaves and ADA Management – Benefits Office at leaves@fwisd.org.

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 PWFA accommodations should contact Leaves and ADA Management – Benefits Office at leaves@fwisd.org to begin the interactive process.

Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications

Policies DK, DBA

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

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than thirty (30) consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notice under ESSA is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call Certification in Talent Management at 817-814-2717.

Outside Employment and Tutoring

Policy DBD

Prohibiting outside employment is related to the legitimate interest of the Board that public school employees devote their professional energies and efforts to the education of children.

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

The full-time position held by an employee of the District shall take precedence over any other occupational interest of the employee. No full-time employee of the District shall engage in any occupation during the contract or work year that is incompatible or presents a conflict of interest with his or her employment with the District. An employee shall not perform any personal work during regular business hours, except while on approved personal leave. The use of any District facilities or property, equipment, or resources for personal business or gain is strictly prohibited.

If a conflict of interest or incompatibility exists, or if it's determined that such employment interferes with the duties and proper performance of an employee's regular assignment, the activity will be denied. In this case, the continuation of outside employment shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment with the District.

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 on the administrator's personal time. Contact Administrative Services for more information.

Outside Professional Services

Professional personnel such as teachers, counselors, coaches, etc. shall not privately tutor students for pay or provide other services to students for pay at the campus to which the employee is assigned, except:

- During the summer months, or
- For District-sponsored initiatives such as mentoring, tutoring programs, or athletic clinics as approved by the University Interscholastic League (UIL), when school is not in regular session.

Written approval to privately tutor students for pay must be obtained from the employee's department supervisor or campus principal.

Performance Evaluation

Policy DN

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continuous process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on 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 and be housed in the District's Management System. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda also can be used to document performance information. All employees will review their written evaluation, participate in a performance conference with their supervisor, and have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

The Health Services Department will establish a nursing peer review committee to conduct nursing peer review (NPR) in accordance with NPR Law (Chapter 303 of the Texas Occupations Code) and the Nursing Practice Act (Chapter 301 of the Texas Occupations Code) for professional nurses. Upon receiving a report of a clinical incident involving a District nurse or nursing services, a nursing peer review committee (a group of registered nurses) may investigate incidents, gather information and determine if the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) should be notified due to potential violations of the Nursing Practice Act, licensure violations or unsafe practices. The committee shall provide written notification to the nurse being reviewed regarding the nursing peer review process as well as other components that are part of the nurse's minimum due process rights under Tex. Admin. Code §217.19(d). This process is separate from any other District investigation into potential employee misconduct.

Employee Involvement

Policies BQA, BQB

At both the campus and District levels, Fort Worth ISD offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees and influence the instructional effectiveness of the District. As part of the District's planning and decision-making process, employees are elected to serve on District- or campus-level advisory committees. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision-making process are available in each campus office or from the employee's department offices.

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

Mental Health Training

Policy DMA

All District employees who regularly interact with students are required to complete an 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's 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 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 workweek. (See *Overtime Compensation*, page 25)

Employees must work a minimum of ninety (90) days per year and receive "Meets Expectations" or better on annual evaluations to be eligible for any Board approved pay increases the following school year.

All employees will receive written notice of their work schedules before the start of each school year. Classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time nurses, and full-time counselors will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the District's extra-duty pay schedule. Employees may visit the Compensation Department website at Compensation@fwisd.org for information regarding the District's pay schedules or their own pay.

Paychecks

Effective the 2024-2025 school year, FWISD has transitioned to semi-monthly paychecks for all employee positions. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the District employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization. The schedule of pay dates for the school year is listed on the District 2026-27 employee calendar.

Automatic Payroll Deposit

Employee paychecks will be electronically deposited into an account the employee must designate. A notification period of one month is necessary to activate this service. Changes to financial institutions may be made in person at the Payroll window or through Frontline ERP-Employee Service Center. Contact the Payroll Department at 817-814-2180 or review the Managing Your Direct Deposit Information website for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Payroll Deductions

Policy CFEA

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

- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) or a FICA Alternative Plan;
- Federal income tax required for all employees;
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired on or after April 1, 1986);
- Child support and spousal maintenance, if applicable.
- Delinquent federal education loan payments, if applicable; and
- Other Legal Garnishments.

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

Overpayments

Employees are not entitled to any funds the district overpays. 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 recoup payment plan will be deducted from the employee's paycheck. 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 payment plan for regular payroll deductions in the same fiscal year.

Overtime Compensation

Policies DEAB, DEC

The District compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. Only nonexempt employees (employees paid at an hourly rate) 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. Effective July 2022, all non-exempt employees must secure written permission in

advance of working any overtime hours. Additionally, supervisors must submit authorized overtime hours **in advance** of the overtime hours being worked through the District's designated overtime hours approval reporting system: Overtime Approval (qualtrics.com).

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked more than 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. For calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:00 a.m. Saturday and ends at 11:59 p.m. Friday each week.

Nonexempt employees who 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. Employees will be compensated for overtime (i.e., hours physically worked beyond the 40-hour workweek) at the rate of time-and-a-half of their regular hourly rate of pay. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Use of comp time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval, as workload permits, or when the supervisor directs the employee to use the time.
- An employee may be required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, local personal).
- Weekly time records will be maintained (through the District's timekeeping system) on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.
- At the District's option, nonexempt employees may receive compensatory time off, rather than overtime pay, for overtime work.
- When compensatory time is used by the non-exempt employee, a substitute is not allowed to work during the employee's absence from duty.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

Policy DEE

Travel documents for approvals/signatures must be submitted no later than twenty-one (21) business days in advance and before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee. Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, a travel request should be submitted to the employee's supervisor and any other required approvers. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by the District. Employees must submit receipts, to the extent possible, to be reimbursed for allowable expenses other than mileage no later than five (5) business days for approved out-of-district travel.

Employees who travel within the Dallas/Fort Worth area on behalf of the District using a personal vehicle may request mileage reimbursement if they do not receive an auto allowance. Mileage reimbursement is due no later than the 15th monthly for the prior month's travel through Frontline ERP. Failure to comply with the due date will forfeit your mileage request being paid. There are no exceptions to this requirement.

Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

Policy CRD

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

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

TRS retirees who are enrolled in TRS-Care (retiree health insurance program) are not eligible to participate in TRS-ActiveCare. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, prices, and eligibility requirements are available to all employees at the FWISD Employee Benefits Portal.

The health insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31 of each year. New employees must enroll online at www.mybenefitshub.com/fortworthisd within the first thirty-one (31) calendar days of employment. Current employees can make changes to their insurance coverage if they experience a qualifying life event. Please contact the Employee Benefits Office at benefits@fwisd.org or 817-814-2240 for more information. At the employee's discretion, health insurance may begin on: (1) the first day the employee is actively at work; or (2) the first day of the calendar month following the date the employee is actively at work.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for dental, vision, life, disability, cancer, accident, and medical transport. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Employee Benefits office at benefits@fwisd.org or call 817-814-2240 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., health savings plan for employees who enroll in a TRS-ActiveCare plan, TRS-ActiveCare HD plan, dental plans, vision plans, flexible spending accounts, 403(b) and 457(b) and additional term life insurance). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.

New employees must accept or **decline** these benefits within thirty-one (31) calendar days of the first day of employment or for a special enrollment qualifying event. All current employees must accept or **decline** this benefit on an annual basis and during the annual open enrollment period.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

Policy CRE

The District, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer from a work-related injury or have a work-related illness.

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, injuries, and illnesses should be reported immediately to the employee's Supervisor, and the Worker's Compensation Department at 817-814-2250.

Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. See *Workers' Compensation Benefits*, for information on the use of paid leave for such absences. For information about reporting a work-related injury and related benefits, please see the department website.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance

Policy CRF

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have employment contracts or reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact the Texas Workforce Commission at 800-628-5115 or through their website.

Teacher Retirement

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four and one-half months are enrolled by the District as members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). Substitutes not receiving TRS service retirement benefits who work at least 90 days a year are eligible to purchase a year of creditable service with TRS. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the District (Talent Management - Resignations Department) as early as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at the Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or by phone at 800- 223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available through their website.

For more information on retiring from FWISD, go to the Talent Management – Resignations Department Resignation and Retirement Separations Website.

Leaves and Absences

Policies DEC, DECA, DECB

The District offers employees paid and unpaid leave of absence in times of need. This section

summarizes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence. Employees who expect to be absent, or are absent, for a period of ten (10) or more consecutive workdays for medical reasons must contact the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office at leaves@fwisd.org or call 817-814-2790 for information about applicable leave benefits, and requirements for communicating with the District regarding the status of their absence from duty. Employees whose absence from duty results in a reduction of pay should contact the Benefits Office at benefits@fwisd.org or 817-814-2240 to discuss options to submit the required co-payments for any elected benefits normally deducted from the employee's paycheck.

Paid leave must be used in one-hour increments unless otherwise authorized through an approved intermittent Family and Medical Leave. If an absence requires a substitute, leave must be entered in 4-hour or 8-hour increments to allow for a substitute to be provided. If an employee is taking intermittent FMLA leave, leave must be recorded in 1-hour increments, regardless of whether a substitute is required. Employees should consult Policies DEC (LOCAL) and DEC (REGULATION) to review their options to select which type of leave accrual they may use for an absence from duty. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state and local leave. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order:

Reason for Absence	**1st Used Balance**	**2nd Used Balance**	**3rd Used Balance**	**4th Used Balance**
Local Personal (formerly Vacation)	Local personal	Local sick	State sick	State personal
Personal (PB)	State personal (PB)	State sick	Local sick	Local personal
Sick	Local sick	State sick	State personal (PB)	Local personal
Maternity	Local sick	State sick	State personal (PB)	Local personal
Family Emergency	Local sick	State sick	State personal (PB)	Local personal

Employees must follow District and department or campus procedures to request and report any leave of absence and submit any required forms and certification required for the absence. Any unapproved absences or absences beyond accumulated or available paid leave shall result in a deduction from the employee's pay and disciplinary action, up to and including termination. 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 (3) consecutive days without notice is considered to have abandoned their job and may face disciplinary consequences up to and including termination.

Absence reason correction: Approved corrections, by the Principal, Department Manager/Director, to Leaves and Absences shall be reported in writing to Substitute Services-Talent Management and the Payroll department within five days after the employee reports back to work.

Immediate Family. For purposes of leave other than Family and Medical Leave, immediate family is defined by Board Policy as the following:

- Spouse;

- Son or daughter, including a biological, adopted, or foster child, a current son- or daughter-in-law, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis;
- Parent, stepparent, current parent-in-law, or another individual who stands in loco parentis to the employee;
- Sibling, stepsibling, and sibling-in-law; and
- Grandparent, spouse's grandparent, and grandchild.

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

Medical Certification

An employee who is absent more than three (3) consecutive workdays because of personal illness must submit a written statement or release from a qualified health-care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the date the employee is able to return to work, and the employee's fitness to perform the work. An employee absent for more than three consecutive workdays because of illness in the immediate family must submit, upon return to work, medical certification of the family member's illness.

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 FMLA leave for the employee's serious health condition, a serious health condition of the employee's spouse, parent, or child, or 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 Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the District as they were prior to the leave. Otherwise, the District does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave. Under TRS-Active Care rules, an employee is no longer eligible for insurance through the District after six (6) months of unpaid leave other than FMLA leave. If an employee's unpaid leave extends for more than six (6) months, the District will provide the employee with notice of COBRA rights.

Personal Leave

Policy DEC

State law entitles all full-time employees to up to five (5) days of paid state personal leave per year, pro-rated based on the employee's first day of employment with the District. State personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of state 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.

Unscheduled Paid Time Off (PTO)

Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. Reasons for this type of leave allow very little, if any, advance planning. Nondiscretionary may be used in the same manner as state sick leave. For leave that is not taken at the employee's discretion, the employee must notify the supervisor as soon as possible and report the absence in the District's automated absence reporting system.

Scheduled PTO

Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor two weeks, or as soon as possible, in advance of the anticipated absence. Supervisors may deny discretionary leave requests on critical workdays or on days when ten percent of staff in the same or similar position have already scheduled absences on the same day(s) requested.

Blackout Days

No scheduled PTO taken at the employee's discretion will be permitted on the day before a school holiday, the day after a school holiday, the first or last day of the semester, professional development days and staff development days, days during the first two (2) weeks of the instructional year, or days scheduled for state-mandated assessments. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in a deduction from the employee's pay, and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

With the exception of blackout days, an employee who is absent more than three (3), but fewer than ten (10), consecutive workdays, because of personal illness must submit a written statement or release from a qualified health-care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the date the employee is able to return to work, and fitness to perform the work. An employee absent more than three (3) consecutive workdays be-cause of illness in the immediate family must submit, upon return to work, medical certification of the family member's illness. **An employee who is absent on a blackout day must submit a written statement from a qualified health-care provider confirming the specific date(s) of the illness.**

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

Policy DEC

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; or
- Active military service.

Local Sick Leave

Policy DEC

Local leave applies to all District employees (not substitute or temporary) who have contributed to the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). Local leave is earned at a minimum rate of one half-day per month (full-time). Employees in positions that normally require ten months of service earn five (5) days each year; employees in positions that normally require 11 months of service earn six (6) days each year; employees in positions that normally require 12 months of service earn seven (7) days each year. The District does not limit the number of local sick leave days employees may accumulate.

An employee shall not earn any local sick leave when he or she is on unpaid status. An employee using full or proportionate paid leave shall be considered to be in paid status.

Local Personal Leave

Policy DEC (REGULATION)

Each full-time District employee in a position normally requiring 239 or more workdays per year will earn paid local personal leave.

Each employee serving as a division chief, associate superintendent, assistant superintendent, or general counsel will earn twenty (20) local personal days per fiscal year. The number of local personal days earned by other eligible employees will be based on the number of years of completed service, since the most recent date of hire, as follows:

Years of Completed District Service	Local Personal Leave Days Earned Per Fiscal Year
1-10 years	10

11-20 years	15
More than 20 years	20

An employee will not earn any local personal leave days when he or she is in unpaid status. An employee who terminates employment before the end of the fiscal year will be required to refund the value of one day of pay for each day of unearned local personal days taken. An employee's use of local personal leave days will be subject to approval from the employee's immediate supervisor.

Local personal leave will be recorded in half-day increments for all eligible employees.

Sick Leave Program

Policy DEC

Sick Leave Program is a pool of local sick leave days contributed by the school district and separating employees to be used by full-time employees (not temporary or regular substitutes) who suffer a qualifying incapacitating personal illness, accident, or qualifying family member's terminal illness and have exhausted the use of all their available leave days. Membership in the program is automatic.

To qualify for the benefits of the program, a catastrophic illness or injury must result in the employee's temporary incapacity to perform his/her job function for an extended period. A catastrophic illness or accident is a condition defined as life-threatening, not a mere passing disorder or ailment. The illness requires treatment by a physician, hospitalization, emergency room treatment, or outpatient treatment at a hospital. Examples of illnesses that may qualify for the benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Cancer
- Heart Disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Stroke
- Organ transplants
- Muscular dystrophy

Family members' terminal illness is limited to the spouse and dependent children under eighteen (18) years of age. For purposes of the Sick Leave Program, "child" refers to a son or daughter, including a biological, adopted, or foster child, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis. This benefit is limited to one employee in a family and only when there is no other family member at home to care for the terminally ill person. For more information, see the *Sick Leave Program Manual*.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—General Provisions

Policy DECA (see *Appendix A for Employee Rights*)

Leave Entitlements

Employees of FWISD who have been employed for twelve (12) consecutive months and worked 1,250 on-duty hours in the preceding twelve months from the date of leave, qualify for Family Medical Leave (FML). Qualified employees are eligible for up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:

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

Any employee who qualifies for FMLA and is a covered service member's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin is eligible for up to twenty-six (26) weeks of FMLA in a single twelve (12) month period to care for the service member with a serious injury or illness.

Employees may use all available leave at one time, or portions of that leave as medically necessary for a qualifying reason. Intermittent FMLA is permissible when healthcare provider documentation specifies the frequency and duration of the leave necessary due to a qualifying reason.

The District requires employees to use accrued paid leave concurrently while on FMLA.

Benefits and Protections

While employees are on FMLA leave, employers must continue health insurance coverage as if the employees were not on leave. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to the same job or one nearly identical to it with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

Eligibility Requirements

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

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

Requesting Leave

Employees shall inform the District thirty (30) days in advance of the need for FMLA leave whenever possible. When not possible to provide thirty (30) days' advance notice, an employee, or the employee's authorized family member when the employee is incapacitated, must contact the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office as soon as possible to apply for extended medical leave. Medical certification for the leave must be submitted on the relevant U.S. Department of Labor

documents within fifteen (15) calendar days of the first day of absence or the requested leave may be denied. Required documents and contact information are available at the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office website and submit the completed paperwork to the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office at leaves@fwisd.org prior to beginning an absence protected under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Employees are not required to share a medical diagnosis but must provide enough information to the District for the determination of qualification for FMLA coverage.

Sufficient information could include informing an employer that the employee is or will be unable to perform his or her job functions, that a family member cannot perform daily activities, or that hospitalization or continuing medical treatment is necessary. Employees must inform the employer if the need for leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Employees requesting leave are required to do the following:

- Provide 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:
  - Spouse;
  - Child (the term child does not include children over the age of eighteen (18) unless they are incapable of self-care due to a physical or mental disability); or
  - Parent (term parent does not include "in-law");
- Provide second or third medical opinions and periodic re-certification for the need for leave, when requested;
- Provide periodic reports during the leave regarding the status and intent to return to work;
- Provide medical certification from a qualified health care provider of the employee's ability to return to work at the conclusion of the leave; and
- Provide medical certification of the need for family military leave.

Employees requiring Family and Medical Leave should contact the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office at leaves@fwisd.org or 817-814-2790 for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations. Employees should fill out the required paperwork found at the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office website and submit the completed paperwork to the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office at leaves@fwisd.org prior to beginning an absence protected under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Employers can require a certification or periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. If the employer determines that the certification is incomplete, it must provide a written notice indicating what additional information is required.

Employer Responsibilities

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

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

Enforcement
Employees may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage, and Hour Division, or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer. The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights. For additional information contact: 1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243), TTY: 1-877-889-5627, or go to www.wagehour.dol.gov

Local Procedures for Implementing Family and Medical Leave Provisions

Eligible employees can take up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period of the fiscal District's fiscal year **(from July 1 through June 30 annually)**. Employees who require FMLA leave and have questions or need details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations should contact the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office at leaves@fwisd.org or call 817-814-2790.

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

Combined Leave for Spouses
Spouses employed by the District are limited to a combined total of twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave 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 permit the use of intermittent or reduced-schedule leave for the care of a newborn child or for the adoption or placement of a child with the employee.

Fitness for Duty
An employee who takes FMLA 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 FMLA leave designation notice to share with the health care provider. Fitness for duty is not required when an employee returns to work following leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition; to care for a child following birth, adoption, or foster care placement; or for qualifying exigency leave.

Return to Work
The employee's release to return to work must be submitted to Health Services at emp.health@fwisd.org. For information, go to the Health Services Department website or call 817-814-2990.

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

In certain cases, instructional employees desiring to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue their current family and medical leave until the end of the semester. The additional time off is not counted against the employee's FMLA 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 DECA (LEGAL).

Failure to Return
If at the expiration of FMLA 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 FMLA 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 seventy-five (75) miles from the District, the District may not require the employee to reimburse the District's share of premiums paid.

Return to Work/Medical Leave Restrictions

Return to Work
An employee granted leave for a personal medical reason must report to and receive clearance from the Health Services department before returning to work. The employee must have a health-care provider's written statement or release confirming the specific dates of the illness, restrictions, if any, and the date the employee may return to work. The Health Services Department will notify the Payroll and Benefits Department of all employees who have been released to return to work. Failure to provide documentation will result in loss of pay. DEC (REGULATION)

Medical Restrictions
Employees who have not been absent or have been absent for less than ten (10) working days, and who have medical restrictions must report to the Health Services Department. The employee shall provide a written statement from the health care provider listing the employee's specific restrictions, limitations, and duration of the restrictions.

Military Leave (FMLA), i.e., Qualifying Exigency Leave/ Military Caregiver Leave

Policies DEC, DECA, DECB

In the case of military caregiver leave, an eligible employee's FMLA leave entitlement is limited to a total of twenty-six (26) workweeks of leave during a "single 12-month period." The "single 12-month period" is measured forward from the date an employee's first FMLA leave to care for the covered service member begins, regardless of the method used by a District to determine the 12-month period for other FMLA leaves. During the "single 12-month period," an eligible employee's FMLA leave entitlement is limited to a combined total of 26 work weeks of FMLA leave for any qualifying reason. 29 C.F.R. 825.200(f), (g). Spouses who are employed by the same District may be limited to a combined total of twenty-six (26) weeks of FMLA leave during the "single 12-month period" if leave is taken as military caregiver leave, for the birth of a son or daughter, for the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition. 29 C.F.R. 825.127(e)(3)

For more information on this leave, please contact the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office at leaves@fwisd.org or call 817- 814-2790.

Local Pregnancy and/or Parenting/Adoption Leave

District employees (except substitute or temporary) are granted up to six (6) consecutive calendar weeks of **Local Pregnancy and/or Parenting/Adoption leave** beginning the first day of the birth/adoption of the child, or the first official date of medical leave, whichever occurs earlier. Compensation is without pay except to the extent the employee has local personal, state personal leave, and/or District local sick leave available. After one year of service to the District, if the employee does not have a sufficient number of leave days to cover the absence, the employee is eligible for sub-dock pay granted at their daily rate less the cost of appropriate substitute pay for up to twenty (20) consecutive leave days from the date of birth/adoption of the child.

Employees must have exhausted all available leave days before being eligible for sub-dock pay. The combination of state personal leave, local personal, District sick leave days, and days subsidized at sub-dock pay shall not exceed six (6) consecutive calendar weeks from the date of birth/adoption of the child. The employee shall report all leave taken to the automated absence reporting system as well as notify the principal, immediate supervisor, or appropriate designee. Employees requesting **Local Pregnancy and/or Parenting/Adoption leave** must should not complete and submit the required paperwork to the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office at leaves@fwisd.org until their medical provider takes them off work, or the child is born/adopted, whichever occurs first.

Local Pregnancy and/or Parenting/Adoption leave runs concurrently with FMLA leave, except for times when the birth/adoption of the child occurs while the employee is off duty from his/her regularly scheduled work year. Under FMLA, eligible employees may take up to twelve (12) workweeks off during the District's fiscal year. FMLA leave is without pay, except to the extent that an employee has leave days available. Employees requesting Local Pregnancy and/or Parenting/Adoption leave should not complete and submit the required paperwork to leaves@fwisd.org until their medical provider takes them off work, or the child is born/adopted, whichever occurs first. For more information, you may contact the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office at leaves@fwisd.org or call 817-814-2790.

Temporary Disability Leave

Policies DEC, DBB

Certified Employees

Any District employee (other than a substitute or temporary employee) is eligible for temporary disability leave. 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. Disabilities caused by or contributed to by pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, childbirth, and recovery therefrom shall be treated the same as any other disability.

Employees must request approval from the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office for temporary disability leave. An employee's notification of the need for extended absence due to the employee's own medical condition shall be accepted as a request for temporary disability leave. The request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days beginning the first date of the absence.

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 employee shall notify the Health Services Department in writing at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the anticipated return to work date. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to resume regular duties. Certified employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned if an appropriate position is available. If an appropriate position is not available, the employee may be assigned to another campus, subject to the approval of the campus principal. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, the employee will be reinstated to a position at the original campus at the beginning of the following school year.

Regular Leave of Absence

Policy DEC

A District employee (not substitute or temporary) may be granted leave for up to one (1) year, or the remainder of a duty year, after completion of three (3) years of service in the District. The Superintendent or designee may consider a leave of absence request for employees who have completed less than three (3) years. This leave may be granted only if the employee is not eligible for any other leave.

Reasons for Regular Leave of Absence:

- Serious illness of the employee;
- Serious illness of the employee's immediate family;

- Child care;
- Personal hardship (facts justifying the request shall be submitted);
- Study in an institution of higher learning (verification of acceptance required);
- Extensive travel that may be considered of equal educational value to training or research in an institution of higher learning; or
- Special service related to education at an approved college or university, Texas Education Agency, governmental agencies, exchange teaching, recognized professional organizations, Peace Corps, Job Corps, or elective office.

Applications for a Regular Leave of Absence for the beginning of the following school year must be made in writing to the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office by May 1st of each year. Exceptions to the May 1st deadline in case of emergencies or extenuating circumstances may be requested in writing to the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office at leaves@fwisd.org. Employees wishing to return to regular employment must notify the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office in writing no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the first day of instruction for the following school year. Notice of intent to return does not guarantee employment. The employee shall be assigned or reassigned subject to the availability of a position for which the employee is qualified.

Failure to provide the notice of intent to return to work by the 45th day may result in a recommendation for termination or non-renewal of employment in accordance with appropriate Board Policies. A Regular Leave of Absence may only be granted once in a seven (7) year span. Exceptions to this timeframe can be approved solely by the Superintendent.

Workers' Compensation Benefits

Policy CRE

An employee absent from duty because of a work-related illness or injury may be eligible for workers' compensation weekly Temporary Income Benefits (TIBs) if the absence exceeds seven (7) calendar days.

An employee receiving workers' compensation weekly TIBs for a work-related illness or injury may choose to use available, partial-day increments of sick leave or any other paid leave benefits to make up the difference between workers' compensation weekly TIBs and the employee's pre-injury or illness wages. While an employee is receiving workers' compensation for weekly TIBs, the District will charge available leave proportionately if the employee elects to do so. Employees who elect to use available leave along with workers' compensation weekly TIBs will receive an amount equal to the employee's regular salary. For information about reporting a work-related injury, and related benefits, please see the Department website or contact 817-814-2250.

Assault Leave

Policy DEC

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured

as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An incident involving an assault is a work-related injury and should be reported to the principal or immediate supervisor. An employee must contact leaves@fwisd.org or 817-814-2790 to request assault leave.

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 leave time medically necessary for up to two years from the date of the assault to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. Assault leave runs concurrently with any FMLA and TDL for which an employee is eligible. At the written request of an employee, the District will immediately assign the employee to assault leave. Within ten working days of the request, the employee must also provide medical certification indicating the amount of time off necessary to recuperate from physical injuries sustained as a result of the assault. In the event of prolonged absences, a physician's medical report must be provided to the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Office whenever the employee's restriction from duty is extended beyond the initial end date reported by the health care provider. 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 of the assault incident, 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 to cover days the employee was absent from duty during the time requested as assault leave.

Bereavement Leave

Policy DEC

District employees (except substitute or temporary) are eligible for bereavement leave. Employees may use up to five (5) workdays per occurrence, subject to the District's approval. Two (2) days shall be permitted at no loss of state or local leave. If an employee has no leave available at the time of the death in the employee's immediate family, the District will grant the employee a maximum of three (3) additional days of bereavement leave for which the District will deduct the daily rate of an appropriate substitute, whether or not a substitute is employed, to be taken between and including the dates of death and the funeral. Bereavement leave may last no longer than five (5) days and is limited to five occurrences per two-year period. Available Bereavement Leave days taken without loss of state or local leave must be taken beginning on the date of the death of the family member and completed no later than the day after the day of the funeral.

Appropriate documentation must be provided for all bereavement leave. The documentation must establish the relationship between the employee and the deceased and will be kept on file by the principal or designee or immediate supervisor or designee, with a copy sent to the Payroll Office.

For Bereavement Leave purposes, immediate family is defined as the employee's:

- Spouse;
- Son or daughter, including a biological, adopted, or foster child, a current son- or daughter-

in-law, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis;
- Parent, stepparent, current parent-in-law, or another individual who stands in loco parentis to the employee;
- Sibling, stepsibling, current brother- or sister-in-law; or
- Grandparent, grandchild, spouse's grandparent.

Jury Duty
Policies DEC, DG

Absences due to compliance with a summons to jury duty, including service on a grand jury, shall be fully compensated by the District and shall not be deducted from the employee's pay or leave balance. The District will not discharge, threaten to discharge, intimidate, or coerce any regular employee because of juror or grand juror service or for the employee's attendance or scheduled attendance in connection with the service in any court of 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 must report back to work as soon as they are released from jury duty or court proceedings if four or more hours remain in the workday, and the absence is not for an employee's personal business. A copy of the release from jury duty or documentation of time spent at the court will be required, and a copy of the certificate, paystub, or subpoena must be sent to the payroll office.

Compliance with a Subpoena
Policy DEC

Employees will be paid while on leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding and will not be required to use personal leave. A copy of the certificate, paystub, or subpoena must be sent to the payroll office. Employees must report back to duty upon release if four (4) or more hours are left in the workday. Absences for court appearances related to an employee's personal business, including both civil and criminal court proceedings, must be taken as personal leave or leave without pay if no personal leave is available.

Truancy Court Appearances
Policy DEC

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

Religious Observance
Policy DEC

The District will reasonably accommodate an employee's request for absence for a religious holiday or observance. Reasonable 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

Policies DEC, DECB (See *Appendix B*)

Paid Leave for Military Service

Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, a reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized Urban Search and Rescue Team is entitled to fifteen (15) days of paid leave when engaged in authorized training or duty orders by proper authority. Beginning September 1, 2022, an additional seven days of leave per fiscal year are available if called to state active duty in response to a disaster. The employee must notify the Leaves and ADA Management - Benefits Department at leaves@fwisd.org by presenting a copy of the order, directive notice, or other documents requiring the employee's absence from work. In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service.

Reemployment after Military Leave

Employees who leave the District to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the District will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. Employees returning to work following military leave should contact leaves@fwisd.org or 817-814-2790. The employee is entitled to return to the same employment held when ordered to active duty or training. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit a written application for reemployment to the Talent Management Department within ninety (90) days of discharge or release. The length of the federal military service cannot exceed five years in order to be eligible for reemployment.

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 twenty-four (24) months. Employees should contact the Benefits Office at benefits@fwisd.org call 817-814-2240 for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Employee Relations and Communications

Employee Recognition and Appreciation

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the District. Employees are recognized at Board meetings, in the

District newsletter, and through special events and activities.

District Communications

Throughout the school year, the Communications Department publishes information via the District's website and social media channels. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

The District's primary method of communication with employees is through the Microsoft Outlook Email System. To use the email system, an employee must have access to a computer and be issued an email account and user ID. Through this system, the District distributes information to employees regarding important issues, concerns, administrative regulations, changes in policies and procedures, and other relevant news. Employees who have an active email account are responsible for reviewing District-wide communications on a regular basis.

Important: When employees activate their District email account, a signature, as approved by the District's Superintendent or designee, is required for all emails, and must contain the employee's name, title, department, phone number, email contact, and street address. Instructions on how to format the email signature can be found in the Communications Department webpage.

The District distributes information to the media via the Communications Department. All information must be processed and approved by the Communications Department before being released to the media.

News Media Relations

Policy GBBA

The District seeks to encourage a positive relationship with the news media as part of a larger process of engagement with the general public in conveying the District's mission, goals, and values. Therefore, it is essential for news media representatives to receive accurate and complete information. In any situation affecting the District or an individual campus, the Superintendent or designee shall be the official District spokesperson and shall be responsible for all communication with the news media.

Complaints and Grievances

Policy DGBA

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

The formal process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up the level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, employees can bring concerns or complaints to the Board of Trustees.

For ease of reference concerning the process of bringing concerns and complaints, see *Policy DGBA (LOCAL)*

Employees who wish to submit a formal complaint as permitted under Policy DGBA (LOCAL) should submit the complaint to the Office of Employee Services. Information for submitting complaints is available on the District's website.

Employee Conduct and Welfare

Standards of Conduct

Policy DH (EXHIBIT)

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. Every employee shall be responsible for:

- Arriving at work on time every day and following attendance and leave procedures;
- Satisfactorily completing the duties as specified by the job description and/or contract, if any;
- Relating to colleagues and supervisors with respect, courtesy, and in a professional manner;
- Spending the workday on work-related activities to the exclusion of personal business;
- Dressing in a manner that is appropriate for the job assignment, that reflects positively on the District, and that includes the use of all issued safety equipment;
- Recognizing that employment with the District is not guaranteed, but is dependent on employee performance, budget, and need;
- Following the established rules of behavior for the District and society in general and as defined by local, state, and federal laws;
- Conducting their duties in a safe manner, following the District's general safety policies and department rules regarding the proper use of approved safety equipment and apparel; and
- Following the directives of the supervisor.

All District employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, District policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines, including intentionally making a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a District investigation may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC by the superintendent no later than the seventh business day after the superintendent knew of the allegation if the employee's resignation is related to the allegation.

The following actions/inactions are examples of conduct that may result in disciplinary consequences for employees. This is a non-exhaustive list, and disciplinary action may be taken for other conduct not explicitly listed here:

- Insubordination;

- Incompetency of inefficiency in the performance of duties;
- Excessive absenteeism;
- Failure to meet the District's standards of professional conduct;
- Failure to maintain an effective working relationship, or good rapport with parents, the community, or colleagues;
- Use of profanity while performing any duties of employment, including on District and off District property;
- Failure to complete certification or permit renewal requirements;
- Failure to follow District Board policies and regulations; and/or
- Any other action or omission by an employee whose performance or conduct is detrimental to students or other employees or the District's interests.

The Educators Code of Ethics, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, which all District employees must adhere to, is accessible online under Policy DHA (LEGAL).

Dress and Grooming

Policy DH (LOCAL)

An employee's dress and grooming shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for his or her assignment, and in accordance with any additional standards established by his or her supervisor and approved by the Superintendent.

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 of employment.

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

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

Supervisors who receive a report or disclosure of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation are required to immediately notify the appropriate District official, as outlined in District policy. In cases involving sex-based discrimination or sexual harassment, supervisors must report the matter directly to the Title IX Coordinator, regardless of whether the employee intends to file a formal complaint. This obligation applies even if the report is informal, or if the employee requests confidentiality. This ensures the District can fulfill its legal responsibilities and provide appropriate support and response.

The District's policy which includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation is accessible online under Policies DIA (LOCAL) and DIA (REGULATION).

Sexual Harassment Reporting Policy

Policy DIA

The Fort Worth Independent School District prohibits sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as defined by the Clery Act or Violence Against Women Act). Sexual harassment conduct includes:

- A District employee using educational benefits, aids, or services to obtain participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (quid pro quo), or
- Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would determine to be severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that would effectively deny a person's access to the District's educational program.

Any district employee who believes that they have 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 their supervisor, the Campus Principal, the Title IX Coordinator, or the Superintendent. The district's Policy DIA includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding sexual harassment: Monica Corona-Hunter, Title IX Coordinator, 7060 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76116; phone: 817-814-1830; email: TitleIX@fwisd.org.

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 officials immediately. 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, Monica Corona-Hunter, at TitleIX@fwisd.org, or call 817-814-1830; the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, Dr. Carolyn Smythe, 504 Coordinator, at Carolyn.Smythe@fwisd.org, or call 817-814-2878, or the 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 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 *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse,* below, and the section titled *Bullying,* page 74, for additional information.

Each campus has a designated Title IX Liaison who plays a vital role in ensuring the District's compliance with Title IX regulations. Title IX Liaisons are responsible for promptly reporting any allegations of sex-based harassment or discrimination to the District's Title IX Office. They ensure that all Title IX-related procedures are followed at the campus level, including the implementation of supportive measures for involved parties, regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed. Liaisons also help facilitate communication with families, assist with evidence collection when requested, and support the implementation of outcomes and recommendations resulting from Title IX investigations. Their role is essential to maintaining a safe and equitable educational environment, and all campus staff are expected to cooperate with and support the Liaison in fulfilling these responsibilities.

See Policy FFH for definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students.

Fort Worth ISD strictly prohibits any conduct by an employee toward a student that may be perceived as a solicitation of a romantic relationship. See "Solicitation of a Romantic Relationship" from Policy DHB (LEGAL).

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 has reasonable cause to believe that the child has been abused or neglected. Law enforcement agencies include the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), a municipal police department, a county sheriff's office, or a county constable's office and does not include the district police. Alleged abuse or neglect involving a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child (including a teacher) must be reported to

CPS.

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

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

Reports to DFPS can be made using the Texas Abuse Hotline (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, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the District is prohibited from taking an adverse employment action against a certified or licensed professional who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. The offense of failure to report by a professional may be a state jail felony if it is shown the individual intended to conceal the abuse or neglect. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal, or assistant principal if the principal is not available. This includes reporting suspected abuse of students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concerns to a campus administrator before making a report to the appropriate agency.

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

Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children

The District has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at the District's Emergency Procedures Manual. As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being

sexually abused or maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law to report the suspected abuse or neglect following the procedures described above in the section *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.

**See Texas Senate Bill 571 for mandatory reporting guidelines for additional information.*

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 the authority to investigate the crime.

Scope and Sequence

Policy DG

If a teacher determines that students need more or less time in a specific area to demonstrate proficiency in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for that subject and grade level, the District will not penalize the teacher for not following the District's scope and sequence.

The District may take appropriate action if a teacher does not follow the District's scope and sequence based on documented evidence of a deficiency in classroom instruction. This documentation can be obtained through observation or substantiated and documented third-party information.

Technology Resources

Policy CQ

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

- Imposes no tangible cost to the District;
- Does not unduly burden the District's computer or network resources; and
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance.

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of District 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 responsible use of agreement and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in the suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary, employment, and legal action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the Educational Technology Department at 817-814-3100.

Personal Use of Electronic Communications

Policy CQ, DH

Electronic communications include all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), weblogs (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 media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic media 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 media 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 the use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, mealtimes, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct District business.
- The employee shall not use the District's logo or other copyrighted material of the District without express, written consent.
- An employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on District business unless the employee first obtains written approval from the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy concerns.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:
    - Confidentiality of student records. [See Policy FL];
    - Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)];
    - Confidentiality of District records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses. [See Policy GBA];
    - Copyright law. [See Policy CY (LOCAL)] ; and
    - Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)].

See *Electronic Communications between Employees, Students, and Parents*, below, for regulations on employee communication with students through electronic media. Employees who violate responsible use of the District network and electronic resources are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including the involuntary termination of employment.

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 numbers or email addresses.

An employee is not subject to provisions regarding electronic communications with a student to the extent the employee has a social or family relationship with a student. For example, an employee may have a relationship with a niece or nephew, a student who is the child of an adult friend, a student who is a friend of the employee's child, or a member or participant in the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization. An employee who claims an exception based on a social relationship shall provide written consent from the student's parents. The written consent shall include an acknowledgment 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 regulations; and
- The parent is solely responsible for monitoring electronic communications between the employee and the student.

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

- Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), weblogs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Web sites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.
- "Communicate" means conveying 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 Media*, in the previous section. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not communication.
- Certified or licensed employee means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

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

- The employee will abide by the standards established in the Educators' Code of Ethics.
- 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.
- Staff shall refrain from communicating with students through standard text messaging. Staff members shall use only District-approved communication platforms, including ParentSquare, Canvas, or District email.
- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page ("professional page") for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable the administration and parents to access the employee's professional page.
- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics including:
    - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL];
    - Copyright law [See Policy CY]; and
    - 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 e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.
- An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.
- All staff are required to use school email accounts for all electronic communications with parents. Communication about school issues through personal email accounts or text messages is not allowed as they cannot be preserved in accordance with the District's record retention policy.
- An employee shall notify his or her supervisor in writing within one business day if a student engages in improper electronic communication with the employee. The employee should describe the form and content of the electronic communication.

Cybersecurity
Policy CQB

The District has developed a cybersecurity plan to secure the District's cyberinfrastructure against a cyberattack or any other cybersecurity incidents, determine cybersecurity risk, and implement appropriate mitigation planning.

Each District employee shall annually complete the cybersecurity training program designated by the District. The District shall verify and report compliance with staff training requirements to the Department of Information Resources. Additionally, the District shall complete periodic audits to ensure compliance with the cybersecurity training requirements.

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

- A verbal or written directive; and/or
- Remote access to District-owned devices and services.

Criminal History Background Checks
Policy DBAA

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

Employee Arrests and Convictions
Policy DH

Regardless of whether an event occurs within or outside of an employee's work calendar year, an employee must notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor and the Office of Professional Standards at 817-814-1880 within three (3) calendar days of any criminal arrest, charge, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of any misdemeanor or felony, including the offenses listed below:

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

- Crimes involving moral turpitude. Moral turpitude includes the following:
    - Dishonesty;
    - Fraud;
    - Deceit;
    - Theft;
    - Misrepresentation;
    - Deliberate violence;
    - Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor;
    - Crimes involving any felony possession or conspiracy to possess, or any misdemeanor or felony transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance;
    - Felonies involving driving while intoxicated (DWI); and
    - Acts constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code § 261.001

If an educator is arrested or criminally charged, the Superintendent is also required to report the educator's criminal history to the Division of Investigations at TEA if the District did not learn of the arrest or charge through the Fingerprint-based Applicant Clearinghouse of Texas (F.A.C.T).

Certified Employees

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

Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:

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

Uncertified Employees

Misconduct or criminal history of an uncertified employee also must be reported to TEA. Information about misconduct or the allegations of misconduct obtained by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse that results in termination, resignation, or criminal history (e.g., arrest, indictment, prosecution, conviction, or other disposition by the criminal justice system, including probation and deferred adjudication) will be reported to TEA.

Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:

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

Employees with questions about reporting requirements should contact the Office of Professional Standards at 817-814-1880.

Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention

Policy DH

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

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

1. Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
2. Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.
3. Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation.
4. Any other intoxicant or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drug. An employee need not be legally intoxicated to be considered "under the influence" of a controlled substance.

Employees who violate this prohibition shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Sanctions may include:

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

As a condition of employment, an employee shall: abide by these terms; and notify the Superintendent, in writing, if the employee is convicted for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace. The employee must provide the notice in accordance with DH (LOCAL). Fort Worth ISD is committed to the health and wellness of all its employees and encourages staff who are struggling with drug or alcohol abuse to access the Employee Assistance Program, a free, confidential resource provided to all employees of the District.

Tobacco Products and E-Cigarette Use

Policies DH, FNCD, GKA

State law prohibits smoking, using tobacco or e-cigarettes (including "vaping" 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, or 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.

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

Fraud and Financial Impropriety

Policy CAA

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

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the District.
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document.
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other District assets including employee time.
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of District financial transactions.
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of District information or activities.
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties.
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the District.
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the District, except as otherwise permitted by law or District policy.
- Inappropriately destroying, removing, or using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment.
- Failing to provide financial records required by federal, state, or local entities.
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by law or District policy.
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the District.
- Failure to comply with requirements imposed by law, the awarding agency, or a pass-through entity for state and federal awards.

Reporting Suspected Medicaid Fraud

District employees are required to adhere to all Federal, State, and local laws governing the rendering of Medicaid-eligible services being submitted for billing. Some of the most important of these laws are the federal False Claims Act, the Texas Medicaid Fraud Prevention Law (TMFPL), and the Texas False Claims Act (TFCA) which impose liabilities punishable by fines, up to and including imprisonment. The federal False Claims Act [31 U.S.C. § § 3729-3733] establishes civil penalties for knowingly submitting false and fraudulent claims to the government for payment. Prohibited

practices include, but are not limited to:

- Making, conspiring, or using a false record or statement to obtain payment from a false claim.
- Soliciting, receiving, or offering payment (cash or in-kind gift) for referring an individual for service arranged for payment under a Federal health care program [Anti-Kickback Statute Section 1128B(b) of the Social Security Act].
- Billing Texas's Medicaid program for services not rendered.
- Submitting a claim for a service rendered by a person not licensed to provide that service.
- Submitting a claim for a service that has not been approved and defined as a part of a student's care.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission Inspector General (IG) is responsible for investigating Medicaid waste, abuse, and fraud in Texas health and human services programs. To report suspected Medicaid fraud or abuse, please contact the IG Integrity Line at 1-800-436-6184 or visit their website at Home | Inspector General (texas.gov).

Additional information is available on the Texas Office of Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit website.

Employee Protections

The federal False Claims Act provides protections for individuals who report suspected fraudulent Medicaid billing practices. District employees are protected against discrimination, retaliation, and harassment for their lawful participation in the disclosure, or refusal to participate in fraudulent claim activity.

Conflict of Interest

Policy CB, DBD

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

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

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

Restriction from Using Personal Apps

Employees are prohibited from using personal cash apps (including but not limited to Zelle, Venmo, ApplePay, etc.) for collecting and/or distributing District, campus, and/or student funds. All financial transactions managed by an employee on behalf of the District must follow District Business Services accounting procedures. For clarification on acceptable fund collection and distribution procedures and policies, please consult with your supervisor.

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 the 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.

Solicitation of Gifts

Policy CDC

Employees who solicit gifts on behalf of the District or for use in the fulfillment of his or her professional responsibilities shall comply with relevant state and federal law and any District administrative regulations. All donations solicited on behalf of the District, including solicitations in the name of the District or a campus, or donations solicited using District or campus resources, become the sole property of the District

Employees may solicit web-based donations of money or items for use by the employee in fulfilling his or her professional responsibilities or for the District's use, including "crowdfunding." However, employees shall obtain prior approval from his or her supervisor before using the name or image of the District, a campus, or any student.

Copyrighted Materials

Policy CY

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

Associations and Political Activities

Policy DGA

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

An individual's employment will not be affected by membership or a decision not to be a member

of any employee organization that exists for the purpose of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work. Use of District resources including work time for political activities is prohibited.

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

Safety

Policy CK

The District has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. See *Emergencies* on page 64 for additional information.

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

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

While driving on District business, employees are required to abide by all state and local traffic laws. Employees driving on District business, whether in their personal vehicle, a vehicle rented by the District, or a District vehicle, 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 Department of Safety and Security at 817-814-2680.

Transporting Students

Employees are prohibited from transporting students in personal vehicles. Employees may only

transport students in District vehicles for District-approved purposes and with appropriate parent/guardian permission. The FWISD Employee Handbook will be updated to reflect this expectation for all employees.

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 immediately to their supervisor and call the Department of Safety and Security at 817-814-2680 or at 817-814-2699 after hours.

Visitors in the Workplace

Policy GKC

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

Electronic Recording of Communications

The District prohibits employees from electronically recording by audio, video, or other means any conversations or meetings unless each and every person present at the meeting has been notified and provided explicit permission to be electronically recorded. Persons wishing to record a meeting must notify anyone arriving late to any such meeting that the meeting is being recorded. An employee shall not electronically record a telephone conversation unless all persons participating in the telephone conversation have been notified of being electronically recorded. This provision is not intended to limit or restrict the electronic recording of publicly posted Board meetings, grievance hearings, and any other Board-sanctioned meeting recorded in accordance with Board policy, or to limit or restrict electronic recordings involving authorized investigations conducted by District personnel. Employees who fail to notify individuals present in a meeting –and to secure their explicit permission to record a meeting or verbal conversation –shall be deemed a violation of Board Policy DH (LOCAL) and are subject to disciplinary action according to District practices and procedures.

Asbestos Management Plan

Policy CSC

The District is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited

management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each school. A copy of the District's management plan is kept in the Environmental Services Department and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

Pest Control Treatment

Policies CLB, DI

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

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a District building forty-eight (48) hours before the treatment begins. Notices are to be made available in an area of common access. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests individualized notice will be notified by telephone, written, or electric means. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

General Procedures

Emergency School Closing

Policy CKC

School Closures and Emergency Communications

The District may close schools, delay opening, dismiss students early, or modify operations because of severe weather, public health concerns, utility outages, safety threats, or other emergency situations. The Superintendent or designee is responsible for making all official decisions regarding changes to District operations.

Employees are responsible for monitoring official District communication channels whenever emergency conditions are possible or anticipated. The District will communicate operational changes and emergency information through a variety of channels, which may include:

- The District website
- The District mobile app(s)
- District email and text message notification systems
- Official District social media accounts, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, and other authorized platforms
- Local television, radio, and other media outlets

Notifications to media outlets will be coordinated by personnel designated by the Superintendent.

If it becomes necessary to release students early or otherwise alter the school day, District officials will notify principals, who will then communicate with campus staff. The District will also provide

timely notifications to parents, guardians, and employees through appropriate communication channels.

Employees are encouraged to ensure their contact information is current and to regularly monitor official District communications during emergencies or severe weather events.

Emergencies

Policies CKC, CKD

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

Purchasing Procedures

Policy CH

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the Purchasing Department on an official District purchase order (PO) form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the District can be made without a PO number. The District will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the District's business office. Contact the Procurement Services Department at 817-814-2200 for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. The home address, primary telephone number, beneficiary, and emergency contact must be changed in the Frontline Employee Service Center. An employee must submit a name change with the Change Request Form located on the District's website. For questions, contact Employee Records at employeerecords@fwisd.org or call 817-814-2760.

Personnel Records

Policy DBA, GBA

Most District records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. In most cases, an employee's personal e-mail is confidential and may not be released without the employee's permission. Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

- Address;
- Phone number, including personal cell phone number;

- Information that reveals whether they have family members;
- Personal e-mail address; and
- Emergency contact information.

The choice not to allow public access to this information or change an existing choice may be made at any time by submitting a written request to the Talent Management Department. New or terminated employees have fourteen (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 the release of information under the law applies. An employee is responsible for notifying the district if he or she is subject to an exception for disclosure of personal or confidential information. An employee's request that is submitted after the 14-day grace period will not apply to any Open Records Request delivered to the District before the employee's request was received.

Facility Use

Policies DGA, GKD

Employees who wish to use District facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The District's Operations Department is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the Purchasing Department at 817-814-2064 to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

Separation 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 teacher employed under a term contract may resign at any other time only with the consent of the Board of Trustees or the Board's designee. The resignation shall be submitted to the District on the designated form or through the District's designated electronic resignation system.

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. If an employee submits a resignation form or letter to a supervisor, the supervisor shall forward the resignation to resignations@fwisd.org, and notify the employee the resignation has been submitted to Talent Management-Resignations for review and processing.

Texas Education Code Sec. 21.210 and State Board of Education (SBEC) rules provide that educators who resign from a Chapter 21 term contract after the statutory resignation deadline, without an approved release and without good cause, may be referred to the Texas Education Agency for potential contract abandonment sanctions. On written complaint by the District, SBEC may impose sanctions against an educator employed under a term contract who resigns, fails without good cause

to comply with the resignation deadline or the provision regarding resignation by consent, and fails without good cause to perform the contract.

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's resignation within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the misconduct listed in the section Reports to *Texas Education Agency*. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns, and there is evidence to indicate that the employee engaged in such misconduct.

Effective for the 2025-2026 school year, principals are required to notify the superintendent of an allegation of abuse made against a District employee within 24 hours of knowledge of the allegation. Principals shall contact the Office of Professional Standards for the process to report such allegations to the superintendent and District.

Non-contract Employees

Non-contract employees may resign their position at any time by using the District's electronic resignation system. Per Policy DFE (LOCAL), employees shall give reasonable notice and shall include in the resignation a statement of the reasons for resigning. Generally, reasonable notice is a written notice of resignation two weeks prior to the last day of employment.

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of a noncertified employee's resignation or termination following an alleged incident of misconduct of abuse of a student or when it was alleged the employee was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual conduct with a student or minor. The superintendent will notify TEA within seven (7) business days of receiving a report from a principal or from knowing about an employee's resignation or termination following an alleged incident of misconduct described above.

Pay Schedule for Resigning Employees

If an employee is scheduled to work less than 239 days and is resigning from employment at the end of their scheduled calendar year, they will be paid off in accordance with their last working day. If the last working day is before the 15th of the month, their final deposit will be at the end of the month. If the last working day is on the 15th or after, their final deposit will be the following month. Their final deposit will include all remaining monies earned during the scheduled calendar year.

If an employee is resigning employment and has not completed the scheduled calendar year, and the employee's last day worked is prior to the 15th of the same month, the employee's final deposit will be at the end of the month of the last day of employment based on the completed Form 100. If an employee's last day worked is on the 15th or after, the employee's final deposit will be the following month based on the completed Form 100.

Health Coverage

If an employee separates employment with Fort Worth ISD after the last day of instruction for the current school year and is covered under TRS ActiveCare health insurance, the employee may extend the health coverage through August of the same year. For the health coverage through TRS-ActiveCare to continue through July and/or August of the current plan year upon separation of

employment, the employee will need to complete the Request for Continuation of TRS-ActiveCare Health Plan Coverage form in the Benefits Office. If this form is not completed in the Benefits Office, the employee's health coverage will end at the end of the month of the last working day or separation date, whichever is later.

All Other Benefits
All other benefits will end at the end of the month of the last working day or separation date, whichever is later (i.e., Dental, Vision, Disability, Cancer, Life, Dependent Life, Long Term Care, Health Savings Account, Flexible Medical Spending Account, Flexible Dependent Care Spending Account, etc.).

Flexible Spending Accounts
Employees may request reimbursement for qualified expenses incurred up to the separation effective date. Employees have 90 days from the separation effective date to submit receipts for reimbursement for qualified expenses.

For assistance or for other questions regarding benefits after separation of employment, please contact the Benefits Department at benefits@fwisd.org or call 817-814-2240.

Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Chapter 21 Contract Employees

Policies DF series, DHB

Employees on Chapter 21 probationary, term, and continuing contracts may be proposed for termination during the contract term according to the procedures outlined in District policies and the Texas Education Code. Employees on term contracts can be non-renewed at the end of the contract term, and employees on probationary contracts may be terminated 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. Probationary contracts terminated at the end of a contract period are final and may not be appealed. The timelines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when written notice is given to an employee.

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's termination within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in the Section Reports to Texas Education Agency. The superintendent or designee will notify SBEC when an employee is terminated, and there is evidence to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when the employee's certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the timelines and procedures can be found in the Policy DF series.

Dismissal of Noncontract Employees

Policies DCD, DP, DGBA

FWISD adheres to the common law doctrine of at-will employment. The District may dismiss at-will employees with or without notice, and with or without cause. However, the District is committed to dealing with its employees fairly and ethically while maintaining efficiency and productivity. Further, it is unlawful for the District to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, sex, military status, genetic information, or any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. (See *Complaints and Grievances*, page 44)

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of a noncertified employee's resignation or termination within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct of abuse of a student or was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual conduct with a student or minor. The superintendent or designee will notify TEA within seven (7) business days of receiving a report from a principal or know about an employee's resignation or termination following an alleged incident of misconduct described above.

Employees involuntarily terminated, demoted, or suspended without pay by the District may, within fifteen calendar days, appeal the action by following the timelines and procedures found in Policy DGBA (LOCAL).

At-will employees who are absent from the workplace for three (3) consecutive workdays, without authorized leave or proof of incapacity, shall thereby be deemed to have effectively abandoned his or her position with the District and will be terminated. Once documented, accepted, and processed, the termination may not be withdrawn without the consent of the Superintendent or designee. The employee and the employee's supervisor will be notified by the Chief Talent Officer or designee of the termination by conduct and its effective date.

Discharge of Convicted Employees

Policy DF

The District shall discharge any employee who has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for an offense requiring the registration as a sex offender or convicted of a felony under Title 5 of the Texas Penal Code if the victim was a minor. If the offense is more than thirty (30) years before the date the person's employment began or the person satisfied all terms of the court order on conviction, the requirement to discharge does not apply.

Exit Interviews and Procedures

Policy DC

An exit survey that provides the District with feedback on the employment experience is sent to all employees separating from the District at the time they complete their online resignation form. The District provides information, through its third-party administrator, on the continuation of benefits and records request(s) at the time of employee separation. Employees leaving the District are

required to maintain a current mailing address and phone number by contacting the Office of Employee Records at 817-814-2760. Employees may also update their current mailing address through the Frontline Employee Service Center portal. All District keys, books, property, including intellectual and electronically maintained records and property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment.

Reports to Texas Education Agency

Policy DF, DHB, DHC

Certified Employees

The voluntary or involuntary separation of a certified employee from the District must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA by the superintendent if there is evidence that the employee was involved in any of the following:

- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other unlawful conduct with a student or a minor.
- Soliciting or engaging in sexual contact or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance.
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of District or school property or funds.
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit for the purpose of a 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 has engaged in conduct violating the assessment security procedures established under TEC §39.0301. "Reported criminal history" means any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions including arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal information, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction that is obtained by a means other than the Fingerprint-based Applicant Clearinghouse of Texas (FACT).

Noncertified Employees

The voluntary or involuntary separation of a noncertified employee from the district must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA by the superintendent 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 separation of employees that are under a court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance to the court and the individual receiving the support (Texas Family Code §§8.210, 158.211). Notice of the following must be sent by the Payroll Department to the court or, in the case of child support, the Texas Attorney General Child Support Division, and the support recipient:

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

Student Issues

Equal Educational Opportunities

Policies FB, FFH

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination against students based on sex, including sexual harassment, should be directed to Monica Corona-Hunter, Title IX Coordinator, 7060 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76116; email: TitleIX@fwisd.org; phone: 817-814-1830. Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to Dr. Carolyn Smythe, 504 Coordinator, 7060 Camp Bowie Blvd Fort Worth, Texas 76116; email: Carolyn.Smythe@fwisd.org; or phone: 817-814-2878. All other questions or concerns relating to discrimination based on any other reasons should be directed to School Leadership.

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 eighteen (18) or is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. A District is not prohibited from granting the student access to the student's records before this time.
- School officials with legitimate educational interests.

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

Parent and Student Complaints

Policy FNG

In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the Board has adopted orderly processes for handling complaints on

different issues. Any campus office or Elementary School Leadership or Secondary School Leadership can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint.

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

Administering Medication, Specialized Health Care Procedure, Diabetes Care

Policy FFAC, FFAF

Administration of Medication

Texas law permits a public school to administer medication prescribed by a physician/licensed prescriber to a child on behalf of the parent or legal guardian under certain limited circumstances with an appropriate written authorization. The only medication that may be given at school is that which is necessary to enable the student to remain in school. If possible, all medications should be given outside of school hours. Three-times-a-day medications can be given before school, after school, and at bedtime. All medications and equipment shall be provided by the parent or legal guardian. If necessary, medication can be given at school under the following conditions:

- Medications must be in original, properly labeled containers. The pharmacy can supply two (2) labeled bottles for this purpose. Medications sent in baggies or unlabeled containers will not be given.
- Medications will not be given without a specific written request signed by at least one parent or legal guardian and a written request by a physician or other health-care professional with authority to write prescriptions. This request should be made on the appropriate form supplied by the school or on a form supplied by the physician or other healthcare professional.
- Medications may be given by a staff member designated by the principal and trained by the school nurse.
- Medications must be kept in the nurse's office in a locked cabinet.
- Parents may bring up to one month's supply of medication. Empty medication containers may be given to students.
- Herbal substances or dietary supplements may be administered by the registered nurse if U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved, with a written request from a physician and parent and provided by the parent and only if required by the individualized education program or Section 504 plan of a student with disabilities.
- A Medication Log shall be maintained to record the administration of all medications. The Medication Log will record the following information:
    - The name of the student.
    - The name of the physician.
    - The name of the medication.

- The prescribed dosage of medication.
- The date the medication was administered.
- The dosage administered.
- The time the medication was administered.
- The name and/or signature/initials of the person administering the medication.

- The principal shall designate school personnel to perform medication administration in the absence of the school nurse and when otherwise appropriate (e.g. field trips). These persons shall have instruction, training and practice appropriate to the task from the school nurse.

Specialized Health Care Procedure

In order to provide continued health care for students who need specialized health care during school hours, the following provisions shall be met:

- The student's physician/health care provider shall complete the Specialized Health Care Procedure Authorization Form authorizing the administration of these procedures at school.
- The Specialized Health Care Procedure Form shall include the following information:
  - Student's name and school;
  - Name of procedure to be performed;
  - Time, duration, equipment needed and/or specific instructions, treatment precautions, possible untoward reactions, and recommended intervention; and
  - School staff authorized to perform the procedure as indicated by the physician.
- The parent or guardian shall sign a Parent's Request for School Health Services Form to have the specialized health care procedure performed during school hours. The following information shall be included on the form:
  - Student's name, D.O.B. and phone number
  - Name of Procedure and
  - Signature of Parent/Guardian
- All medications and equipment shall be furnished by the parent or legal guardian.
- The principal shall designate school personnel to perform specialized health care procedures in the absence of the school nurse and when otherwise appropriate (e.g. catheterizations, g-button feeding, suctioning of student). These persons shall have instruction, training and practice appropriate to the task from the school nurse.

Diabetes Care

The parent or guardian of a student who will seek care for diabetes while at school or while participating in a school activity, and the physician responsible for the student's diabetes treatment, shall develop a diabetes management and treatment plan (DMTP).

The DMTP must:

- Identify the health-care services the student may receive at school
- Evaluate the student's ability to manage and the level of understanding of the student's diabetes and
- Be signed by the parent or guardian and the physician. The parent or guardian must submit the DMTP to the school:
- Before or at the beginning of the school year

- On enrollment of the student, if the student enrolls after the beginning of the school year or
- As soon as practicable, following a diagnosis of diabetes for the student.

Upon receiving the student's DMTP, the school principal, or designee, and the school nurse shall develop an individualized health plan (IHP) for the student. The IHP shall be developed in collaboration with the student's parent, or guardian and, to the extent practical, the physician responsible for the student's diabetes treatment and one or more of the student's teachers.
At each school in which a student with diabetes is enrolled, the principal shall:

- Seek school employees who are not health-care professionals to serve as unlicensed diabetes care assistants (UDCAs) to care for students with diabetes and
- Make efforts to ensure the school has: − At least one (1) UDCA if a full-time nurse is assigned to the school and − At least three (3) UDCAs if a full-time nurse is not assigned to the school.

Dietary Supplements

Policies DH, FFAC

District employees are prohibited by state law from selling, marketing, or distributing a dietary supplement that contains performance-enhancing compounds to a student. In addition, employees may not 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 mental health diagnosis; or
- 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, FO series

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management strategies that have been adopted by the District. Other employees who 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, a student who returns to school must comply with the District's Attendance Policy and provide proper documentation (See Policy FEA (LEGAL) for required documentation excusing 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, as soon as possible to the campus principal or designee. The District's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students. Procedures for reporting a bullying incident and investigation of reports of bullying of District students are included in Policy FFI (REGULATION). For procedures regarding the transfer of a student who is a victim of bullying or who engaged in bullying, see Policy FDB.

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 some initiation rites are permissible, engaging in or permitting "hazing" is a criminal offense. Any teacher, administrator, or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus administrator.

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APPENDIX A

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—General Provisions

The following text is from the federal notice, *Your Employee Rights Under the Family and Medical Leave Act.* Specific information that the district has adopted to implement the FMLA are outlined on page 33 of this Handbook.

What is FMLA leave?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Am I eligible to take FMLA leave?

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

- You work for a covered employer,
- You have worked for your employer at least 12 months,
- You have at least 1,250 hours of service for your employer during the 12 months before your

leave, and

- Your employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of your work location

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

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

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

How do I request FMLA leave?

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

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

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

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

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

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

What does my employer need to do?

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

- Allow you to take job-protected time off work for a qualifying reason,
- Continue your group health plan coverage while you are on leave on the same basis as if you

had not taken leave, and

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

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

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

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

Where can I find more information?

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

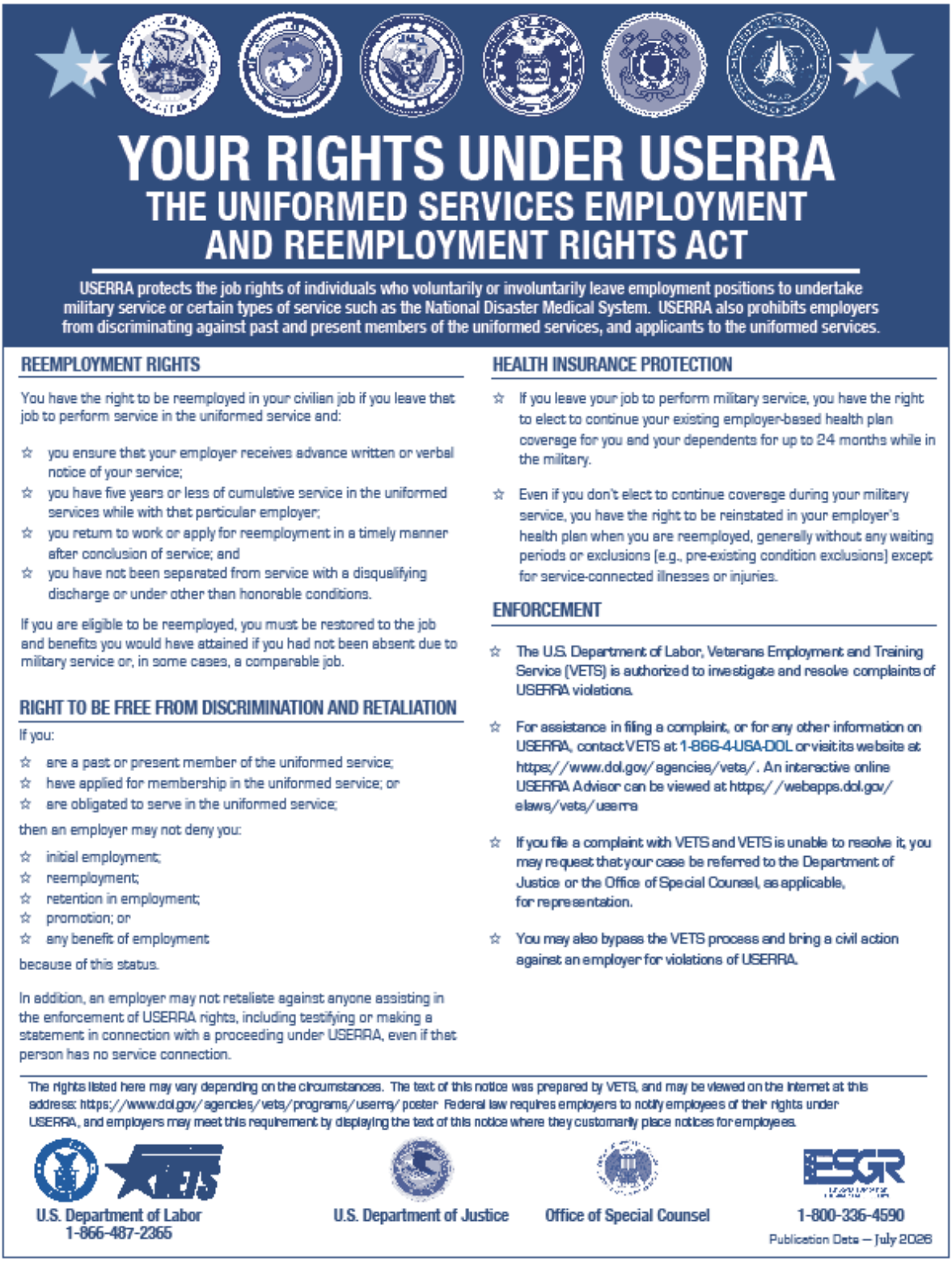
WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

SCAN ME

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

APPENDIX B

Your Rights Under USERRA: The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act



YOUR RIGHTS UNDER USERRA
THE UNIFORMED SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT

USERRA protects the job rights of individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily leave employment positions to undertake military service or certain types of service such as the National Disaster Medical System. USERRA also prohibits employers from discriminating against past and present members of the uniformed services, and applicants to the uniformed services.

REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

You have the right to be reemployed in your civilian job if you leave that job to perform service in the uniformed service and:

- ☆ you ensure that your employer receives advance written or verbal notice of your service;
- ☆ you have five years or less of cumulative service in the uniformed services while with that particular employer;
- ☆ you return to work or apply for reemployment in a timely manner after conclusion of service; and
- ☆ you have not been separated from service with a disqualifying discharge or under other than honorable conditions.

If you are eligible to be reemployed, you must be restored to the job and benefits you would have attained if you had not been absent due to military service or, in some cases, a comparable job.

RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION

If you:

- ☆ are a past or present member of the uniformed service;
- ☆ have applied for membership in the uniformed service; or
- ☆ are obligated to serve in the uniformed service;

then an employer may not deny you:

- ☆ initial employment;
- ☆ reemployment;
- ☆ retention in employment;
- ☆ promotion; or
- ☆ any benefit of employment

because of this status.

In addition, an employer may not retaliate against anyone assisting in the enforcement of USERRA rights, including testifying or making a statement in connection with a proceeding under USERRA, even if that person has no service connection.

HEALTH INSURANCE PROTECTION

- ☆ If you leave your job to perform military service, you have the right to elect to continue your existing employer-based health plan coverage for you and your dependents for up to 24 months while in the military.
- ☆ Even if you don't elect to continue coverage during your military service, you have the right to be reinstated in your employer's health plan when you are reemployed, generally without any waiting periods or exclusions (e.g., pre-existing condition exclusions) except for service-connected illnesses or injuries.

ENFORCEMENT

- ☆ The U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) is authorized to investigate and resolve complaints of USERRA violations.
- ☆ For assistance in filing a complaint, or for any other information on USERRA, contact VETS at 1-866-4-USA-DOL or visit its website at https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/. An interactive online USERRA Advisor can be viewed at https://webapps.dol.gov/elaws/vets/userra
- ☆ If you file a complaint with VETS and VETS is unable to resolve it, you may request that your case be referred to the Department of Justice or the Office of Special Counsel, as applicable, for representation.
- ☆ You may also bypass the VETS process and bring a civil action against an employer for violations of USERRA.

The rights listed here may vary depending on the circumstances. The text of this notice was prepared by VETS, and may be viewed on the Internet at this address: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/programs/userra/poster Federal law requires employers to notify employees of their rights under USERRA, and employers may meet this requirement by displaying the text of this notice where they customarily place notices for employees.

U.S. Department of Labor
1-866-487-2365

U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Special Counsel

ESGR
1-800-336-4590

Publication Date – July 2026

APPENDIX C

Texas Educators' Code of Ethics

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. *19 TAC 247.1*

Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Ethical Conduct Toward Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 3.8. The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.

Standard 3.9. The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

1. The nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
2. The subject matter of the communication;
3. Whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
4. Whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
5. Whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
6. 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.

19 TAC 247.2