Laredo ISD

2019-2020 Employee Handbook

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of a disability, please e-mail egarza@laredoisd.org.

Si necesita este documento en español, favor de comunicarse al 956-273-1022
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Employee Handbook Receipt

Name _______________________________Employee ID ___________

Campus/Department ___________________________

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Laredo ISD Employee Handbook in electronic format and accept responsibility for accessing it according to the instructions provided. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

I understand that the most updated employee handbook can be found on the district’s website on the home web page: www.laredoisd.org

If I choose to receive a hard copy of the employee handbook I understand I am required to contact Human Resources for a hard copy.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this document. As the district provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

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

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

-------------------------------------------------------------------
Signature _______________________________ Date ____________________________

Please sign and date this receipt and forward it to Human Resources.
Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all district policies and procedures are included. Those that are, have been summarized. In the event of a discrepancy between any information contained in our Employee Handbook or Board Policies, Board Policy will govern.

Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.

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

The Board Policy Manual, available at each campus and online at http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/1208, contains further details about district operations. Policies, regulations, and handbook information can be modified by the Laredo ISD Board of Trustees and/or the Superintendent or his designee at any time without notice or a written revision of this handbook. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate district office.
District Information

About Us

The Laredo Independent School District was established in 1882. LISD is a district encompassing more than 13 square miles. It is made up of 33 educational institutions: 20 elementary schools, four middle schools, four high schools, including the Hector J. Garcia Early College High School located on the campus of Texas A&M International University, the Francisco S. Lara Academy; our alternative education campus, Jose A. Valdez High School, and three magnet schools. The three magnet schools are the Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts, the Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Early College School; located at Martin High School, and the Sabas Pérez School for Engineering and Technology Education; located at Cigarroa High School.

The district has a yearly average of 24,000 enrolled students and over 4,500 employees striving for academic excellence. At Laredo ISD, learning is the key to a bright and successful future. By setting high standards, the district plays a crucial role in preparing the students to meet the challenges and demands of today's high-tech and multicultural work place.
District Map

Laredo ISD Plan E

Laredo ISD Plan E
- Plan E
- Laredo ISD Existing Districts
- Laredo ISD streets

Legend:
- Yellow: d7
- Brown: d6
- Brown: d5
- Pink: d4
- Green: d3
- Blue: d2
- Green: d1

Map by RL Rico Associates
119 E. Travis, Suite 1946
San Antonio, Texas 78202
322-222-9976
Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives
Policy AE

Mission Statement

LISD will prepare students to be highly successful, critical thinkers and effective problem solvers who are confident, self-motivated, and actively involved in our local and global community.

Vision

Diverse opportunities for student excellence make LISD schools the primary choice for families in the district. Our schools are safe and nurturing environments that motivate and prepare students to contribute and excel in life. They build on the strong and expanding foundation already established by families, local business leaders and community partners involved in student learning.
**Board of Trustees**  
*Policies BA, BB series, BD series, and BE series*

Texas law grants the board of trustees the power to govern and oversee the management of the district’s schools. The board is the policy-making body within the district and has overall responsibility for the curriculum, school taxes, annual budget, employment of the superintendent and other professional staff, and facilities. The board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal laws and regulations.

The board of trustees is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community’s commitment to a strong educational program for the district’s children. Board members are elected from single member districts and serve four-year terms with elections held in even-numbered years in accordance with the following schedule:

- Districts 1, 2, 4, and 7 elections in 2020, 2024 and thereafter in a like manner;
- Districts 3, 5, and 6 elections in 2018, 2022 and thereafter in a like manner.

Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

- Hector J. Garcia, President, District 6
- Hector J. Noyola, Vice President, District 3
- Ricardo Garza, Secretary, District 4
- Jose A. Valdez, Trustee, District 1
- Claudia V. Balli, Trustee, District 2
- Dr. Minita Ramirez, Trustee, District 5
- Monica Garcia, Trustee, District 7

**Board Meeting Schedule**  
The board usually meets on the first Thursday following the tenth of every month at the Amber Yeary Board Room, located at 1620 Houston Street. In the event that large attendance is anticipated, the board may meet at another announced location. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and 1702 Houston Street at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time.
The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

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

Current Board practice allows time during the Public Forum for patrons to speak up to three minutes. You must register prior to the meeting by signing your name on the "Public Forum Sign-in-Sheet."


**Superintendent’s Cabinet**

Dr. Sylvia G. Rios  
Superintendent of Schools

Flor Ayala  
Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Business Services

Veronica Castillon  
Executive Director for Communications and Community Relations

Dr. Gerardo Cruz  
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Elva M. Martinez  
Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services

Miguel Munoa  
Assistant Superintendent for Technology

Dr. Roberta G. Ramirez  
Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Angel Velazquez  
Assistant Superintendent for Plant Facilities & Support Services

Oscar Perez  
Assistant Superintendent for Administration, Compliance & Student Safety
Calendar

2019-2020 SCHOLASTIC CALENDAR

November

December

January

February

March

April

May

June

Helpful Contacts

From time to time, employees have questions or concerns. If those questions or concerns cannot be answered by supervisors or at the campus or department level, the employee is encouraged to contact the appropriate department as listed below. http://www.laredoisd.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=328992&pageId=697496
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<th>School Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone:</th>
<th>Fax:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antonio M. Bruni Elementary</td>
<td>1508 San Eduardo Ave. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-3000</td>
<td>(956) 273-3095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Jose Gallego Elementary</td>
<td>520 Clark Blvd. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-3100</td>
<td>(956) 273-3195</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leon Daiches Elementary</td>
<td>1401 Green St. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-3200</td>
<td>(956) 273-3295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita T. Dovalina Elementary</td>
<td>1700 W. Anna Ave. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-3320</td>
<td>(956) 273-3395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco Farias Elementary</td>
<td>1510 Chicago St. 78041</td>
<td>(956) 273-3400</td>
<td>(956) 273-3495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demetrio D. Hachar Elementary</td>
<td>3000 Guadalupe St. 78043</td>
<td>(956) 273-3500</td>
<td>(956) 273-3595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heights Elementary</td>
<td>1208 Market St. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-3600</td>
<td>(956) 273-3695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus A. Kawas Elementary</td>
<td>2100 S. Milmo Ave. 78046</td>
<td>(956) 273-3700</td>
<td>(956) 273-3795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Z. Leyendecker Elementary</td>
<td>1311 Garden St. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-3800</td>
<td>(956) 273-3895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honore Ligarde Elementary</td>
<td>2800 S. Canada Ave. 78046</td>
<td>(956) 273-3900</td>
<td>(956) 273-3995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher M. MacDonell Elementary</td>
<td>1606 Benavides St. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-4000</td>
<td>(956) 273-4095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph C. Martin Elementary</td>
<td>1600 Monterey Ave. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-4100</td>
<td>(956) 273-4195</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarence L. Milton Elementary</td>
<td>2500 East Ash 78043</td>
<td>(956) 273-4200</td>
<td>(956) 273-4295</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alma A. Pierce Elementary</td>
<td>800 Eistetter St. 78041</td>
<td>(956) 273-4300</td>
<td>(956) 273-4395</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael S. Ryan Elementary</td>
<td>2401 Clark Blvd. 78043</td>
<td>(956) 273-4400</td>
<td>(956) 273-4495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomas Sanchez/Hermelinda Ochoa Elementary</td>
<td>211 E. Ash St. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-4500</td>
<td>(956) 273-4595</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Maria Elementary</td>
<td>3817 Santa Maria St. 78041</td>
<td>(956) 273-4600</td>
<td>(956) 273-4695</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santo Niño Elementary</td>
<td>2701 Bismark St. 78043</td>
<td>(956) 273-4700</td>
<td>(956) 273-4795</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katherine F. Tarver Elementary</td>
<td>3200 Tilden Ave. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-4800</td>
<td>(956) 273-4895</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry B. Zachry Elementary</td>
<td>3200 Chacota St. 78046</td>
<td>(956) 273-4900</td>
<td>(956) 273-4995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis J. Christen Middle</td>
<td>2001 Santa Maria Ave. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-6000</td>
<td>(956) 273-6195</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louis J. Christen Middle</td>
<td>2001 Santa Maria Ave. 78040</td>
<td>(956) 273-6000</td>
<td>(956) 273-6195</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louis J. Christen Middle</td>
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<td>(956) 273-6000</td>
<td>(956) 273-6195</td>
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Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity
Policies DAA, DIA

Laredo ISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Additionally, the district does not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to a discriminatory employment practice. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant’s job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment should contact Edna M. Garza, PHR, SHRM-CP, the district Title IX coordinator at 956-273-1022. Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should contact Edna M. Garza, PHR, SHRM-CP, the district ADA/Section 504 coordinator at 956-273-1022. Questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any other reason should be directed to the Superintendent.

Job Vacancy Announcements
Policy DC

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

The link to the job vacancies is found below: https://www.applitrack.com/LISD/onlineapp/jobpostings/view.asp?internaltransferform.Url=

Employment after Retirement
Policy DC

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

Any person who has retired with TRS and returns to work with Laredo ISD is responsible for paying all surcharges that are applicable to them as determined by TRS. Any surcharge that is incurred by LISD will be automatically deducted from the employee’s pay check. Currently, LISD does not pay any surcharge.

**Contract and Noncontract Employment**

*Policy DC series*

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

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

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

**Term Contracts.** Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification and nurses will be employed by term contracts after they have successfully completed the probationary period. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract. Employment policies can be accessed online or copies will be provided upon request.

**Noncertified Professional and Administrative Employees.** Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as non-instructional administrators) are employed by a one-year contract that is not subject to the provisions for nonrenewal or termination under the Texas Education Code. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.
Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees. All paraprofessional and auxiliary employees, regardless of certification, are employed at will and not by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

Certification and Licenses

 Policies DBA, DF

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to the certification coordinator in Human Resources in a timely manner.

A certified employee’s contract may be voided without due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual’s failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact the district’s Human Resources Department at 956-273-1000 if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

Recertification of Employment Authorization

 Policy DC

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

Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization, or employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact the Human Resources Department if you have any questions regarding reverification of employment authorization.
Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

Policy CQ, DHE

Noninvestigatory searches in the workplace, including accessing an employee’s desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable. Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no legitimate expectation of privacy in those places, thus any personal property found in the employee’s workstation, classroom, office, etc. is subject to be searched. The employee assumes all risk for the personal property brought into district premises. 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. Searches will be conducted in the presence of an LISD Police Officer.

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

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

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

Drug testing may be required as a condition of initial employment for any position.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact the Human Resources Department at 956-273-1000.

Employees Required to Have a Driver’s License. Any employee whose duties require a driver’s license is subject to drug and alcohol testing. This includes all drivers who operate a motor vehicle to conduct district business. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily
perform duties other than driving are subject to drug and alcohol testing requirements if their duties include driving.

Drug testing may 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 will be conducted following accidents that occur while conducting district business by the district’s approved vendor at the approved facility. 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 Driver’s License or who otherwise are subject to alcohol and drug testing will receive a copy of the district’s policy, the testing requirements, and detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse and the availability of assistance programs.

Drug testing may be required as a condition of initial employment for any position.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug testing policies and related educational material should contact the Human Resources Department at 956-273-1000.

**Health Safety Training**

*Policies DBA, DMA*

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, University Interscholastic League, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to the district’s Health Services Coordinator by 956-273-1250.

**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. A reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Campus reassignments must be approved by the principal at the receiving campus except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned or removed at any time. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the
district process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and district policy DGBA (Local).

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. The request for transfer will follow the same procedures of an applicant. An internal applicant will complete an internal on-line application for the position desired. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Human Resources Department and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

**Workload and Work Schedules**

*Policies DEAB, DK, DL*

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

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

A principal may require additional time for in-service training, and/or staff meetings, and/or “parent/teacher nights”, “report card nights”, etc. with as much notice as possible to the teacher unless urgent circumstances arise that demand immediate attention.

The District shall have the right to assign or reassign any employee to positions, duties, or additional duties and to make changes in responsibilities, work, or transfers, at any time during the contract term. Employee is, further, subject to the assigned duties and/or directives given to employee by supervisory personnel.

**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. Changes in work schedules may be necessary due to district needs. The administration reserves the right to change the employee’s schedule with little or no notice. Non-exempt employees are required to take a minimum of thirty (30) minutes lunch break unless approved by administration due to business necessity.
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 Administrative Regulation DC-7 and Overtime Compensation on page 26 for additional information.

All employees, with the exception of those exempt from clocking in/out by the Superintendent must use the time clock on contract days as well as designated work days.

**Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk**  
*Policies DEAB, DG*

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

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

Employees are advised that minimal interruption to instruction will be considered.

**Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications**  
*Policies DK, DBA*

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

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. 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 956-273-1013.
Outside Employment and Tutoring
Policy DBD

Employees are required to disclose in writing to their immediate supervisor any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of the district. Supervisors will consider outside employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest. An employee must complete the Outside District and/or Other Employment Form and seek clearance from Human Resources prior to their first day on their secondary job.

Performance Evaluation
Policy DN series

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

Employee Involvement
Policies BQA, BQB

At both the campus and district levels, Laredo 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 Adriana Guzman, Staff Development Coordinator or Rosina Silva, Director of Guidance.

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.

Records of staff development are maintained by TEA’s Region One Service Center. For additional information on staff development activities and the TEA’s Region One Service Center database contact the LISD Office of Staff Development at 273-1710.

Employees are required to properly report their absences as school business on staff development days and are notified their attendance on staff development days are subject to being audited.
Compensation and Benefits

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends
Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative regulations 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 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 26.)

All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules annually. Positions identified by the state 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. For stipends that include extra work days the Human Resources Department will specify the additional days to be worked.

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

Paychecks

All employees are paid monthly. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee’s written authorization.

An employee’s payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of leave accumulated. Contact the Payroll Department at 956-273-1056 for questions regarding deductions. The Human Resources Department can answer any questions regarding how pay is calculated and divided into the number of pays.

Listed below are the scheduled 2019-2020 pay dates and the deadlines for submitting extra duty pay, tutors, crossing guards, and/or adjustments for corresponding pay dates. All documentation received in the Division of Finance by 5:00 P.M. on the payroll information deadlines shown below will be included in the corresponding pay date month. Any employee who fails to submit required paperwork and meet these important deadlines will result in disciplinary action, up to including termination of employment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Date</th>
<th>Payroll Information Deadlines</th>
<th>Payroll Cutoff</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 18, 2019</td>
<td>July 8, 2019</td>
<td>Saturday, June 29, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 20, 2019</td>
<td>August 1, 2019</td>
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<td>September 19, 2019</td>
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<td>November 20, 2019</td>
<td>November 1, 2019</td>
<td>Saturday, October 26, 2019</td>
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<td>December 16, 2019</td>
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<td>January 21, 2020</td>
<td>January 8, 2020</td>
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<td>March 23, 2020</td>
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<td>Saturday, May 23, 2020</td>
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If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please call the Payroll Department at 273-1052.
Automatic Payroll Deposit

Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of 30 days is necessary to activate this service. Contact the Payroll Department at 273-1052 for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Payroll Deductions

*Policy CFEA*

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

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

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include deductions for the employee’s share of premiums for health, dental, life, and vision insurance; annuities; and higher education savings plans. Employees are also deducted mandatory levies. Employees also may request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations and certain charitable contributions approved by the board. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Overtime Compensation

*Policies DEAB, DEC*

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

By default, Laredo ISD offers compensatory time in lieu of overtime. Compensatory time is calculated in the same manner as overtime at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off.
Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee’s regular work schedule. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at midnight on Sunday and ends at 11:59 pm on Saturday.

Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for the hours set by the normal work schedule. Any shortage to the designated work hours will be either deducted from approved leave or docked from employee’s pay check.

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

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 hours of comp time.
- Comp time must be used within 30 days from earned date. Exceptions to extend the 30-day deadline must be approved by the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business Services and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources.
- Comp Time must be used during the fiscal year it was earned.
- Use of comp time may be at the employee’s request with supervisor approval, as workload permits, or at the supervisor’s discretion. Comp Time follows the provisions of discretionary leave. **An absence must be reported into the SmartFind Express system if the employee did not report to work.** The use of comp time must be reported to the Attendance and Substitutes System.
- For non-exempt employees, comp time may be taken in less than one hour increments employee must report the absence for the period of time they will use comp time, therefore one job number shall be created. Once the job number is entered into the system, the employee must request the conversion of leave into comp time and those documents must be approved by supervisor and sent over to the Human Resources Department for processing immediately. Every specific job number must be for one type of leave. The HR Department will not process any requests to split one job number (absence).
- Comp Time may be used to attend to personal matters such as children’s school functions, picking children from school, attend to job interviews, parent/employee grievances, and medical appointments.
- An employee will be required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., state/local)
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.
Travel Expense Reimbursement
Policy DEE

In order for travel to be eligible for appropriation, it should be:
a) Necessary or mandated by federal, state or local laws.
b) Eligible for appropriation and
c) Adequately approved through the LISD travel authorization levels.

Eligible employee travel requests paid by district funds shall be approved as follows:
a) All travel requests are to be initiated by the employee submitted via workflow.
b) Approved by Supervisor.
c) If applicable, approved by Principal or Director.
d) Approved by Program Director (if paid from grant funds).
e) Approved by Finance and verified for availability of funds.
f) Out of State/Country: Same as in-state above and Superintendent’s Approval.
NOT ALLOWED IN CONSECUTIVE YEARS

Travel Reconciliation
All travel requests must be reconciled within ten (10) working days upon return from the trip. The form should be completely filled out and have required signatures (traveler and supervisor) and include all supporting documents such as: original itemized receipts, detailed lodging receipts, mileage (MapQuest/Google Maps), and travel workflow.

A. Meals – Meal rates are based on the current per diem rates listed on the GSA website. Savings from one meal can be combined with another meal but must be reasonable and justifiable. Student counts must be provided and will be reconciled only up to the number of students preapproved. All meals per diem advances must be reconciled within five business days as follows: 1. No more than five (5) original itemized receipts per day, not to exceed current per diem rates listed on the GSA website. Receipts must include restaurant name, time, date, and list the items ordered. Credit Card receipts will not be honored. 2. Meal purchases for others (including family) will be disallowed. This includes multiple entrées, family meals, etc. 3. Purchases cannot be from local (Laredo) restaurants/stores. 4. Purchases of alcoholic beverages must be declared at time of reconciliation and will not be reimbursable. 5. No meal allowance will be granted when meals are covered by conference or registration fees, or any other instance in which the employee does not pay for the meal. Traveler may claim full meal per diem when a medical condition exists. The condition must be documented with the Human Resources Department.

B. Lodging – Lodging rates are based on the GSA Per Diem Max Lodging Rate for the listed city. Always present the Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Form at the hotel. When reconciling provide itemized lodging receipt which identifies the taxes and other items charged.
C. Mileage – Mileage is paid based on map mileage obtained from MapQuest or Google Maps, which indicates the distance traveled at the most currently posted Standard Mileage Rate issued by the IRS. Make sure to submit in the printout of the original version of MapQuest or Google Maps that was provided for approval of the travel workflow. This helps expedite your reconciliation and provides the accurate original backup to justify your mileage. Present the completed reconciliation form with all required documents and signatures to Accounts Payable. Do not drop off or Pony the reconciliation with money (cash/check/money order) to Accounts Payable. Claimant or representative must stay to complete the process and pay cashier. Failure to reconcile or provide original itemized receipts may result in the travel advance or payment becoming a personal liability. There will be a payroll deduction processed on the next pay date and a five dollar ($5) non-refundable processing fee will be charged on any delinquent travel funds owed to the district. For complete travel reconciliation procedures please go to: http://laredo.ss11.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_328908/File/School%20Business/Financial%20Operations/Financial%20Operating%20Guidelines/TravelReconciliationExplanationSheet.pdf

**Health, Dental, and Life Insurance**

*Policy CRD*

Group health insurance coverage is available to all full-time employees. The district’s contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the board of trustees. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, prices, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in the Health Benefit Plan Summary.

The health insurance plan year is from January 1st through December 31. New employees must complete enrollment forms within the first 30 days employment. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage once a year during open enrollment unless there is a family status change. Employees should contact Payroll and Benefits Department for more information at 273-1055.

**Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

*Policy CRD*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for Dental, Vision, Voluntary Life and Disability. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Payroll and Benefits Department for more information.
Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

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

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

Workers’ Compensation Insurance
Policy CRE

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers’ compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers’ compensation coverage from Texas Mutual Insurance September 1, 2018 - August 31, 2019.

Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case.

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to immediate supervisor, Risk/Safety Department and Human Resources Department. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. See Workers’ Compensation Benefits, page 47 for information on use of paid leave for such absences. Please contact the Risk & Safety Department at 956-273-1170 for any questions or concerns.

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 Human Resources.
Teacher Retirement
Policy DEA

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify Human Resources as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web (www.trs.texas.gov) See page 15 for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

Accrued Sick Leave Buyback
The District shall buy back accrued unused sick leave from employees when they retire from the District with full benefits under the Teacher Retirement System (TRS). Buyback of accrued leave shall be at the rates established in the District’s approved pay plan, without local increments. See Leaves and Absences, page 33 for additional information on leave accrual.

This one-time only benefit shall be available to employees who have served at least ten (10) consecutive years in the District; however, the plan shall also apply to employees who die while employed by the District, regardless of the length of their employment, with payment made to the Estate of Employee.

Rate for Professional Employees. A professional employee who retires meeting the eligibility criteria specified above shall be paid for accumulated leave to a maximum of 40 days of state leave and 40 days of local sick leave at the following prorated schedule:

1. Five days of state leave at 100 percent of the daily base rate;
2. Ten days of state leave at 75 percent of the daily base rate;
3. Twenty-five days of state leave at 50 percent of the daily base rate; and
4. Forty days of local sick leave at $100 per day.

Rate for Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees. A paraprofessional or auxiliary employee who retires meeting the eligibility criteria specified above shall be paid for accumulated leave to a maximum of 80 days of leave as follows:

1. First ten days at 100 percent of the daily rate of base pay;
2. Next 15 days at 75 percent of the daily rate of base pay; and
3. Next 55 days at 50 percent of the daily rate of base pay.

**Employee Wellness Program**

The district recognizes the importance of offering programs and benefits for employees and their families. The Wellness programs are designed to assist employees improve their health and well-being in an effort to improve employee attendance and productivity. A variety of wellness programs are offered to employees throughout the year and information will be shared by Department of Compliance and School Safety and the Office of Communications.
Leaves and Absences
Policies DEC, DECA, DECB

The district offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence. Employees who expect to be absent for an extended period of more than five days should call the Human Resources Attendance and Substitute Office (956-273-1016) for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums, and requirements for communicating with the district.

Paid leave must be used in one-hour increments for nonexempt and administrative/professional employees and in half-day increments for instructional employees requiring a substitute. 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:

- Local leave
- Personal leave (state leave)
- State sick leave (accumulated prior to 1995-96)
- Sick Leave Bank (if applicable)
- Extended Leave (if applicable)

Employees must follow district and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate form or certification.

Reporting Absences
All employees must report all absences, including school business to the automated system in addition to the procedures established by their campus/department. Absences should be reported via the LISD WebCenter - Smartfind Express either by phone or online. It is mandatory that all employees call into the system to report their absence.

Additionally, district employees as soon as possible and/or prior to the absence(s) shall notify their immediate supervisor or designee, if they will be late for work or absent for any reason. In the event of an emergency, notification should be made at the earliest practical time, especially if a substitute is required to cover an employee’s responsibility. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action, up to including termination.

An employee user guide, which explains how to use the online and phone system, can be found online at the L.I.S.D. WebCenter located on the E-Systems webpage or by clicking the link below.

In addition to the employee user guide, please take note of the L.I.S.D. specific procedures below.

**Online Absence System.** To access the online system, use the following steps:

2. For employees
3. Find **E-Systems**, and click the link.
4. Find Bus/HR Services and click the link.
5. Find **Webcenter – Attendance and Management System**, and click the link.
6. Find **Click here to access Webcenter**, and click the link.
   - Note that you may also access the employee user guide from this screen.
7. Login: The User ID is the employee number.
   The PIN is the personal PIN created the date you were processed as a new employee. The PIN may be updated by calling the Attendance and Substitutes Office.
8. Follow the instructions in the employee user guide to create, review, modify, or cancel an absence. The browser’s “back” button is not accurate for navigating screens. Click on the appropriate tabs to change screens, or click the “continue” or “cancel” buttons in order to proceed or return to the prior screen.
   - Note that cancelling an absence in which a substitute accepted requires contacting the campus principal.

Another option for accessing the online system is clicking the direct link below but note that the direct link bypasses the employee user guide.


**Phone Absence System.** To access the phone system:

1. Call 956-465-0126
2. Follow the instructions of the voice guide and refer to the employee user guide in order to create, review, modify, or cancel an absence.
   - Note that cancelling an absence in which a substitute accepted requires contacting the campus principal.

**Coding Absences (Reason)**

- Personal illness (See *Leaves and Absences* on page 33)
- Family illness (See *Leaves and Absences* on page 33)
- Death in the family (See *Bereavement Leave* procedures on page 49; documentation required)
- Jury duty (See *Jury Duty Leave* procedures on page 49; documentation required)
- School Business in District (used when the employee will be at any LISD campus or administrative building); approval and documentation required
- School Business Out of District (used when the employee will be anywhere else other than LISD); approval and documentation required
- School Business – Athletics (used for duties related to coaching); approval required

**General Information for WebCenter.** In general, absences for local leave and personal nondiscretionary leave should be submitted in WebCenter in advance and reported by the employee to their supervisor. In emergency situations, local leave and personal nondiscretionary leave may be submitted in WebCenter with little advanced notice, and the employee should contact their supervisor directly. Personal discretionary leave requires advanced approval and five days’ notice. See also *Personal Leave* and *Local Leave* on page 37-38. Absences cannot be entered for prior dates or times. Absences for prior dates need to be entered by the employee’s supervisor.

Any absence not reported by 10:00 a.m. on the day the absence occurred may be automatically submitted by the employee’s supervisor or administrator as local leave or personal leave and deducted in the order specified in *Leaves and Absences* on page 33. Employees with no paid leave available will be submitted as unpaid leave. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that all absences are reported appropriately. Supervisors may deny an employee’s request to use accrued leave if the employee fails to abide by district guidelines.

When entering the a.m. and p.m. for the absence times, verify that it is entered correctly. For example, 12:00 noon would be p.m. and 12:00 midnight would be a.m.

Teachers requiring substitutes should submit absences in whole-day or half-day (four hours) increments either for the first half of the workday or the last half of the workday. Due to the system’s settings, the first half of the day should be reported from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and second half of the day should be reported from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., regardless of the actual hours worked.

- Any midday absences or absences less than four hours, for teachers requiring substitutes, must be done through the campus clerk in charge of employee attendance and approved by a campus administrator; WebCenter should not be used for these circumstances.

Additionally, teachers requiring substitutes are required to contact their campus principal when cancelling an absence in which a substitute has already accepted.

Special instructions to the substitute submitted online cannot be viewed by the substitute. Special instructions should be communicated through the campus master teacher or substitute clerk.

Employees needing further assistance using WebCenter may call 956-273-1017 or 956-273-1015 during normal business hours.
Immediate Family. For purposes of leave other than family and medical leave, immediate family is defined as the following:

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

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

Medical Certification. Any employee who is absent 5 days or more because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and—in the case of personal illness—the employee’s fitness to return to work. Documentation must be submitted to Human Resources prior to returning to work.

Any employee who sought medical care at an emergency room, was hospitalized either for an impatient or outpatient procedure must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider indicating the employee’s fitness to return to work.

However, an immediate supervisor under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources may request that medical certification be submitted when absences are less than 5 consecutive days.

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 continue to have a portion of the health insurance premium 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. Once an employee uses all paid leave and then continues on an approved unpaid leave other than family medical leave, the district will provide the employee with notice of COBRA rights.

Personal Leave

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

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

Discretionary. Leave taken at an employee’s discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor 5 days in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee’s absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor. If the employee is absent without approval, employee will be deducted their rate of pay for the days/hours absent, regardless if they had accrued leave.

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.

Employees will use accrued compensatory time or personal leave when attending to personal matters such as going to job interviews, medical appointments, and/or picking up children from
school. In addition, employees will also need to use leave to attend to matters related to employee grievances such as filing grievances and/or activities related to the business of employee grievances.

**State Sick Leave**

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State sick leave can be used only in one-hour increments for nonexempt and administrative/professional employees and in half-day increments for instructional employees requiring a substitute, except when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis or when coordinated with workers’ compensation benefits.

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

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

**Local Leave**

All employees may earn an additional five workdays of local sick leave per school year, at a rate of one-half workday for each 18 workdays of employment, up to the maximum of five workdays annually. Local sick leave shall accumulate without limit and shall be taken with no loss of pay.

Local sick leave may be used for personal illness, illness or death in the immediate family, family emergency, or for first-year care following the birth of an employee’s son or daughter or the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care.

Local sick leave may also be used to attend medical appointments related to worker’s compensation illness or injury when an employee chooses to use paid leave in lieu of worker’s compensation temporary weekly income benefits. See page 47 for more details.

Employees identified as having fever at work are asked to go home and seek medical attention and report their absence as personal 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, local 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 local leave the employee used beyond his or her pro rate entitlement for the school year.

Non Contract Days

The number of non-contract days vary by school year and position. The District may designate when non-contract days need to be taken. Non-Contract Days are non-paid days. The employee is responsible for ensuring that they properly record the non-contract days used and that they ensure that they do not exceed the number of non-contract days allowed. Exceeding the number of non-contract days will automatically cause the employee a pay deduction in the amount of their daily rate times the number of days exceeded.

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, non-contract days may not be available. 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 non-contract days used. Employees may request to convert non-contract days to personal leave during the school year or at the end of the contract year. Conversion of days requires supervisor approval.

For information on non-contract days available contact Human Resources Attendance and Substitutes Office.

Vacation

Policy DED

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

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

**Discretionary.** Leave taken at an employee’s discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor 5 days in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee’s absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor. If the employee is absent without approval, employee will be deducted their rate of pay for the days/hours absent, regardless if they had accrued leave.

**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-rated entitlement for the school year.

Employees will use accrued compensatory time or personal leave when attending to personal matters such as going to job interviews, medical appointments, and/or picking up children from school. In addition, employees will also need to use leave to attend to matters related to employee grievances such as filing grievances and/or activities related to the business of employee grievances.

**Sick Leave Bank**

The sick leave bank is made available to all employees who are eligible for membership in TRS after one year of employment with the district. Employees must apply during open enrollment at the beginning of each fiscal year (September). Notification of acceptance will be sent to each employee who applied to be a member of the Sick Leave Bank.

For more information, contact Human Resources.
Catastrophic Leave Pool

The Catastrophic Leave Pool is made available to all employees who have exhausted all paid leave (including non-contract days and sick leave bank), who suffer from a catastrophic illness or injury or is absent due to the catastrophic illness or injury of a member of the employee’s immediate family. The employee may request the establishment of a catastrophic leave pool, to which District employees may donate local, and/or state leave for the use by the eligible employee. If the employee is unable to submit the request, a member of the employee’s family or supervisor may submit the request to establish a catastrophic leave pool. For more information, contact Human Resources.

Extended Leave

Extended leave shall be available to all employees who have exhausted all paid leave and non-contract days for any FMLA protected illness/injury; an employee shall have at least one-half leave day available to qualify. Under these circumstances, an employee may be granted a maximum of 15 days of extended leave per year with reductions to the daily rate of pay made in accordance with administrative regulations. Employee must request extended leave from the Human Resources Office.

Suspension Without Pay

Employees can be placed on a suspension without pay status when employees have violated policy and or Code of Ethics and an adverse action is pending by the district.

Administrative Leave

At the discretion of the Superintendent and/or the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, an employee may be placed on administrative leave with or without pay when in the best interest of the school district.

Absence Control Policy

The district follows an absence control policy, an employee may be terminated when he or she is:
1. Released by a doctor to return to work but fails to contact the district’s department of Human Resources to pursue a work assignment; or
2. Unable to report to work and fails to request or extend a leave of absence; or
3. Unable to report to work and has no earned paid leave available and, if eligible to apply for leave of absence does not request a leave.

The uniform enforcement of a reasonable absence-control policy is not retaliatory discharge.

After the fourth absence in a semester, a verbal conference should take place between the employee and supervisor. After the eighth absence, a written record of conference should be provided to the employee and documentation submitted to Human Resources.

All absences in excess of ten days during a semester shall be investigated by the immediate supervisor who shall take appropriate action as required by District guidelines.

Supervisors shall report absences for individuals in excess of 20 days in a school year to the Superintendent or designee who shall take whatever action is deemed appropriate. Such action may result in disciplinary action including termination of employment.

Documentation may be required for any absence at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.

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

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

**Leave Entitlements**

Eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 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 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;

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

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

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

**Benefits and Protections**

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

Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to the same job or one nearly identical to it with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

**Eligibility Requirements**

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

• Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months;

• Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before taking leave;* and

• Work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee’s worksite.

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

**Requesting Leave**

Generally, employees must give 30-days’ advance notice of the need for FMLA leave. If it is not possible to give 30-days’ notice, an employee must notify the employer as soon as possible and, generally, follow the employer’s usual procedures.

Employees do not have to share a medical diagnosis, but must provide enough information to the employer so it can determine if the leave qualifies for FMLA protection.
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.

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 its 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:

www.wagehour.dol.gov

**Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions**

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period from August 1 through July 31

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

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

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

Fitness for Duty. An employee that takes FML due to the employee’s own serious health condition shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification from the health care provider. If certification of the employee’s ability to perform essential job function is required, the district shall provide a list of essential job functions (e.g., job description) to the employee with the FML designation notice to share with the health care provider.

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

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

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

District Contact. Employees that require FML or have questions should contact the Human Resources Department’s Attendance and Substitutes Office at 956-273-1016 for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.
Temporary Disability Leave

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

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

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

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

**Noncertified Employees.** Temporary disability (unpaid) leave may also be granted to other eligible full-time employees for a maximum of 180 calendar days, upon approval of the Superintendent or designee. In order to qualify for such a leave of absence, an employee must have worked 1,250 hours during the previous 12-month period from the date of the request for temporary disability leave.

Noncertified Employees must request approval from Human Resources for temporary disability leave. An employee’s notification of need for extended absence due to the employee’s own medical condition shall be accepted as a request for temporary disability leave. The request must be accompanied by a physician’s statement confirming the employee’s inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days.
When a noncertified employee is ready to return to work, Human Resources should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician’s statement confirming that the employee is able to resume regular duties. Reinstatement to regular employment shall be on a position-available basis only. Employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school or work location to which they were previously assigned if an appropriate position is available. If an appropriate position is not available, the employee may be asked to apply for vacant positions and will be subject to the interview process. Positions are not guaranteed to the employee.

**Temporary/Permanent Accommodations**

Requesting an accommodation is an interactive process between the employee and the Human Resources Department’s 504/ADA Coordinator. An employee requesting accommodation for a disability/medical condition shall complete a Request for Accommodation Form and submit a Functional Assessment Form completed by their physician.

The request should be submitted at least 30 days in advance of the employee’s effective date of accommodation by the District. In the event, that the disability/medical condition is sudden, the employee must make the request for the accommodation as soon as they have knowledge that they will be in need of accommodations.

The employee may submit the documents prepared by their physician to the 504/ADA Coordinator. The 504/ADA Coordinator may need to meet with the employee to identify what accommodations will be needed in their present job assignment. Human Resources Department Administration will review the restrictions with representatives of the health care profession to determine if the accommodations being requested are within the diagnosis or condition. Both the Human Resources Department Administration and representative of the Risk Management Department may review job description, facilities, equipment used, etc., to determine if the essential job functions can continue to be fulfilled by the employee seeking the accommodation. LISD will make the most reasonable accommodation possible, provided employee can continue to perform the essential functions of the job. A reasonable accommodation will be provided depending on resources available and for a limited period of time.

**Workers’ Compensation Benefits**

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

An employee receiving workers’ compensation wage benefits for a job-related illness or injury, and not on assault leave, may choose to use accumulated sick leave or any other paid leave benefits. An employee choosing to use paid leave will not receive workers’ compensation weekly
income benefits until all paid leave is exhausted or to the extent that paid leave does not equal the pre-illness or -injury wage. If the use of paid leave is not elected, then the employee will only receive workers’ compensation wage benefits for any absence resulting from a work-related illness or injury, which may not equal his or her pre-illness or -injury wage. Employee’s absences will be deducted from the paycheck if the employee chooses not to use their accrued leave. Workers’ compensation wage benefits will begin either when paid leave is exhausted, the employee elects to discontinue use of paid leave, or leave payments are less than the employee’s pre-injury average weekly wage.

In the absence of an indication from the employee regarding this choice, the District shall place an employee who is receiving workers’ compensation wage benefits on paid leave if any is available to the employee. In the case of an employee who has no accrued unused paid leave, a professional employee shall be placed on unpaid temporary disability leave, and a paraprofessional or support employee shall be placed on leave without pay.

**Return to Work Program**

The Return to Work Program allows the employee the opportunity to work with restrictions. The district will provide a bona fide job offer to a position that can accommodate the employee’s restrictions for a temporary period of time with no loss in compensation. Bonafide work assignments are subject to availability. If the employee is under Worker’s Compensation and denies the bona fide job offer, the employee will lose their Temporary Income Benefits.

**Assault Leave**

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An incident involving an assault is a work-related injury and should be immediately reported to the campus/department’s safety officer or District’s Safety Officers. An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person’s age or mental capacity renders the person nonresponsible for purposes of criminal liability.

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

**Bereavement Leave**

Employees shall be granted up to three (3) consecutive calendar days absence with pay following the death of an “immediate family” member. It shall be the duty of the Campus/Department Administrator or designee to determine the justification of such leave. Bereavement leave will not be granted if death of “immediate family” member occurred during district holidays, breaks, or on employee’s scheduled non-contract days.

“Immediate Family” for the purpose of this section shall include only the following relations of an employee or employee’s spouse:


The Bereavement Leave Verification form can be obtained at the Human Resources Department.

**Jury Duty**

The district provides paid leave to employees who are summoned to jury duty. 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 is to provide the district a copy of the summons to document the need for leave.

The District may not discharge, discipline, reduce the salary of, or otherwise penalize or discriminate against an employee because of the employee’s compliance with a summons to appear as a juror. For each regularly scheduled workday on which a non-salaried employee serves in any phase of jury service, the District shall pay the employee the employee’s normal daily compensation. Jury Duty Leave will not be granted if summoned to jury duty, during district holidays, breaks, or on employee’s scheduled non-contract days. An employee’s accumulated personal leave may not be reduced because of the employee’s service in compliance with a summons to appear as a juror. In order to receive compensation, employees should submit proof of attendance to the campus/department administrator or designee upon return to work after jury service. If proof of attendance is not submitted within one month, leave will be docked from employee’s personal illness. A jury summons is not considered acceptable proof. Any compensation paid to the employee for their jury service may be used at the employee’s discretion.
An employee may be required to report back to work as soon as they are released from jury duty. The supervisor may consider the travel time required and the nature of the individual’s position when determining the need to report to work. A copy of the release from jury duty or documentation of time spent at the court may be required.

**Compliance with a Subpoena**

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

Absences for court appearances related to an employee’s personal business shall be deducted from the employee’s personal leave or shall be taken by the employee as leave without pay.

**Truancy Court Appearances**

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

**Religious Observance**

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

**Military Leave**

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

**Reemployment after Military Leave.** Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. Employees returning to work following military leave should contact their designated Human Resources Administrator. **Continuation of Health Insurance.** Employees who perform service in the uniformed services may elect to continue their health plan coverage at their own cost for a period not to exceed 24 months. Employees should contact Payroll and Benefits for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

**Time Clock/Sign In**

All employees of the district are required to clock in and out at their designated time clock location for each duty shift as well as for lunch breaks, unless exempt by the Superintendent. Currently, employees not required to use the time clock, are teachers except if working in summer program; Superintendent’s Cabinet members, campus principals, and assistant principals. Campus administration are required to sign in and out daily on the appropriate logs. Time clocks are located at each campus and administrative buildings. Itinerant staff or staff conducting district business away from their designated work location are also required to use the time clock to register their visits to the various campuses and departments while conducting district business. Employees who fail to adhere to these procedures are subject to have their leave docked for the period of time that their work time is not reflected on the time sheet and are also subject to disciplinary action, up to including termination. For questions on how to use the time clocks, refer to the campus or location time clock manager.

**Tardiness**

All employees are required to report to work at their designated times as established by the assignments and schedules of the campus/department. If employees cannot report to work as scheduled, they should notify their supervisor no later than 10 minutes after their regular starting time. This notification does not excuse the tardiness but simply notifies the supervisor that coverage will be needed for their assignment. Employees are not to cover classroom duties unless approved by campus administration. If a teacher arrives after a substitute has been called by campus administration, the teacher will be required to take ½ day of leave. Excessive tardiness will be subject to progressive disciplinary consequences (i.e., verbal, written, reprimand) up to including termination of employment.
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 media events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities also include the annual service awards event and retirement and employee of the year banquet.

District Communications

Throughout the school year, the Office of Communications publishes information, newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials via electronic format. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

The use of electronic mail is widely used throughout the district to communicate with employees and supervisors. Employees are required to check their electronic mail sent to their district’s email address continuously.
Complaints and Grievances

Policy DGBA

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

The formal process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, employees can bring concerns or complaints to the board of trustees. For ease of reference, the district’s policy concerning the process of bringing concerns and complaints can be found and is set forth in the following link:

http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/1208?filter=DGBA

This proceeding is an administrative meeting and as such all individuals present are expected to speak and act in a professional manner to one another. Should the Hearing Officer find the need to recess or end the hearing due to unprofessional behavior, the grievance will be forfeited. The grievance hearing will be audio recorded and a copy of the recording will be available to the grievant and respondent, as requested. During the presentations, the history of concerns are limited to those that occurred within the last 15 work days prior to the grievance being filed.

The grievant does not have an automatic right to call live witnesses to testify at the hearing; however, the hearing officer has the sole discretion to allow witnesses to testify if deemed appropriate. A request for testimony of witnesses b the grievant should be reduced to writing and submitted to the Hearing Officer for consideration at least 3 days prior to the grievance hearing. Live witnesses will only be allowed with the prior approval of the Hearing Officer.

The grievant may only be represented by one person at the hearing. No other observers, supporters or family members of the grievant may attend the hearing unless requested in writing prior to the hearing and approved by the hearing officer. The grievant’s representative shall mean any person who or an organization that does not claim the right to strike and is designated by the employee to represent him or her in the complaint process. The employee may designate a representative through written notice to the District at any level of this process. The representative may participate in person or by telephone conference call. If the employee designates a representative with fewer than three days’ notice to the District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the District’s counsel.
The District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

The hearing officer may decide whether to have any person(s) grievances against (the “respondent(s)” ) attend the hearing if the hearing officer determines that this will facilitate a resolution of the issues made the basis of the grievance.

The grievance hearing shall take no more than one hour, unless otherwise authorized by the hearing officer. (The hearing officer has the authority to extend the time period if deemed appropriate.

- The grievant will provide copies of all written documentation supporting the complaint.
- The grievant will be allowed 15 minutes to present the complaint.
- The respondent (if present) will then be allowed 15 minutes to present.
- The grievant will then be allowed 5 minutes for rebuttal.
- The hearing officer may review the following information provided in the grievance form:
  a) The date(s) of event(s) giving rise to the complaint.
  b) The factual basis for the complaint.
  c) The harm to the grievant resulting from the complaint.
  d) The remedy being sought by the grievant.

The hearing officer may elect to offer recommendations to resolve the complaint. Limited discussion may ensue. If a solution is mutually agreed upon, the terms of the agreement shall be put in writing and signed by both parties with the timelines established in Board policy, DGBA (Local) for responding to grievances.

If there is no resolution at the time of the hearing, the hearing officer will issue a decision in accordance with the timelines established in Board policy, DGBA (Local).

**Participation at a hearing is considered personal business and is not compensable time for the grievant.**

Employee complaint/grievance forms are found at the Human Resources Department.

Should any conflict arise as to the interpretation of this section with Policy DGBA, the terms and provisions of Policy DGBA shall control.

For further assistance or questions in regards to complaints and grievances, employees may contact the Human Resources Department at 956-273-1000.
Employee Conduct and Welfare

Standards of Conduct

Policy DH GKB

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the district and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. Employees are expected to observe the following standards of conduct (not all inclusive):

- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Report any suspected child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency within 48 hours of the event that led to suspicion.
- Refrain from engaging in prohibited harassment/sexual harassment, or other employees, unpaid interns, student teachers, or students.
- Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action, up to including termination.
- Know and comply with department and district policies and procedures.
- Fulfill all duties or responsibilities as per job description.
- Maintain discipline in any situation in which the employee is responsible for the oversight and supervision of students.
- Comply with all district directives and refrain from insubordination and retaliation.
- Refrain from conducting personal business during working hours when it results in neglect of duties.
- Maintain an effective working relationship and establish a positive rapport with all district employees, including administrators, colleagues, students, parents and community members.
- Refrain from the use of profanity in the course of performing any duties of employment, whether on or off district premises, in the presence of students, staff, or members of the public.

- Maintain responsibility for their public conduct when using social media even when they are not acting as district employees.

- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.

- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.

- Use district time, funds, and property for authorized district business and activities only.

- District and school facilities should not be used to advertise, promote, sell tickets, or collect funds for any non-school related purpose without prior approval of the Superintendent or designee.

- Notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor within three (3) calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest, or guilty plea or any adjudication of any felony. See also Employee Arrests and Convictions, page 82, for more information.

- Refrain from discriminating, including harassing, any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy DIA.

- Comply with the district’s drug and alcohol policy.

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines, including intentionally making a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the superintendent knew of the incident. See Reports to the Texas Education Agency, page 96 for additional information.

**Disabled Parking**

Persons with disabilities shall not be restricted from parking in designated disabled parking spaces in any District parking facilities. District employees are prohibited from restricting access to parking spaces designated for persons with disabilities, during special events, including meetings of the Board of Trustees, disabled parking spaces shall not be assigned to dignitaries, board members or other staff.
**Mandated Trainings**
Employees must complete any required trainings requested throughout the year by the district, campus principal, director and/or supervisor. Training may include, but not limited to, sexual harassment, sensitivity, child abuse and neglect, FERPA and others.

**Dress Code**
Employees will act as role models by exemplifying the highest standard of professional appearance for the educational purposes of teaching community values and proper grooming and hygiene. The following standards will apply:

1. Cleanliness and neatness are expected of all staff at all times.
2. Outer garments will fit properly and be of acceptable length (no shorter than three inches above the knee). Spandex material outer garments are not acceptable. Undergarments must not be visible.
3. Blouses and shirts must have sleeves and must cover the midriff and lower back including reaching or bending. Halter, bare backs, tank tops, spaghetti straps, muscle shirts, see-through garments, and revealing or provocative necklines will not be permitted. Shirt tails must be tucked in. In addition, clothing with symbols, inappropriate language, phrases or slogans that advertise tobacco, alcohol products, controlled substances, or political advertisements are unacceptable.
4. No hats, caps, or other head coverings will be worn inside the building except as required by specific assignments or events.
5. Hair will be clean and well-groomed including facial hair. Haircuts and hair color should not cause a distraction in the classroom or in the workplace.
6. Footwear will exclude shoes and sandals without a back strap, flip flops, heels over 4”, slippers, shower shoes, and house shoes. Shoes shall be appropriate for the responsibility. Gym teachers-gym shoes. Cafeteria workers, non-slip soles and possible steel toe. Maintenance workers non-slip soles and steel toe shoes. Teachers should wear classroom appropriate shoes.
7. Shorts, leggings, warm-ups, wind suits, sweat suits, low-rise, cargo, spandex or similar tight pants, exercise clothes, or any garment that may appear to be an undergarment is unacceptable.
8. Denim clothing such as pants, skirts, or capris may only be worn on teacher workdays or on days designated by the principal or supervisor, e.g. campus field day, and approved by the Superintendent or designee. When denim clothing is designated, it must be clean and neat with no holes, no extreme fading or worn look, and worn with a school spirit shirt. Low-rise and skinny jeans are unacceptable.
9. Jewelry will not be worn in a visible pierced area other than the ear.
10. Tattoos will be covered at all times.
Exceptions - The following exceptions will apply:

1. Physical education, JROTC staff, band directors, and other employees assigned to specialized courses may wear appropriate attire approved by the administration during that specific period only. Employees must adhere to the dress and grooming standards when assigned other duties such as testing, trainings, etc.

2. Instructors and other staff in early childhood classes (PK-1st) or special education self-contained units, occupational therapists, physical therapists, health assistants and nurses may wear well-kept scrubs.

3. Instructors in shop mechanic courses, culinary arts, music, or early childhood classes may wear aprons, smocks, or coveralls during the instructional period.

4. Auxiliary employees in maintenance, custodial service, transportation, food service, and positions requiring uniforms such as police and security officers shall comply with grooming and safety guidelines specified by their supervisors and the Safety Department.

5. Exceptions to these general guidelines are to be made as necessary to allow staff to observe religious customs or beliefs and as necessary to accommodate medical needs.

Administrators shall have the discretion to determine appropriateness of attire and grooming. Administration may make special exceptions for teachers in certain grades or subjects or for medical necessities as approved by the Superintendent or designee.

For employees who have been issued a uniform, employees must wear the LISD issued uniform when reporting to duty and adhere to the dress code standards stated above, deviations from the uniform must be approved by the director or supervisor.

Employees shall comply with the standards of conduct set out above, violations may result in disciplinary action, up to, including termination of employment.

**Educator’s Code of Ethics**

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

*Texas Educators’ Code of Ethics*

**Statement of Purpose**

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession,
shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification. (19 TAC 247.1(b))

Enforceable Standards
1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 1.10 The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.
Standard 1.11 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly or recklessly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.

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

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

2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

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

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

Standard 3.3 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.
Standard 3.4  The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.

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

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

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

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

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

(i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;

(ii) the subject matter of the communication;

(iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;

(iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;

(v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and

(vi) Whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.
Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation
*Policies DH, DIA*

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees, 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 including termination of employment.

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

The district’s policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation is reprinted below:

The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy. Discrimination against an employee is defined as conduct directed at an employee on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that adversely affects the employee’s employment.

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

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

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

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination defined as unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For the purposes of this policy, District officials are the Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and the Superintendent.
Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Title IX coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:

Name: Edna M. Garza, PHR, SHRM-CP  
Position: Human Resources Administrator  
Address: 1702 Houston Street, Laredo, TX 78040  
Telephone: (956) 273-1022

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

Name: Edna M. Garza, PHR, SHRM-CP  
Position: Human Resources Administrator  
Address: 1702 Houston Street, Laredo, TX 78040  
Telephone: (956) 273-1022

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

**Reporting Investigations**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A complainant who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through policy DGBA(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level. The complainant may have a right to file a complaint with appropriate state or federal agencies.

Copies of reports alleging prohibited conduct, investigation reports, and related records shall be maintained by the District for a period of at least three years.
This policy shall be distributed annually to District employees. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the District administrative offices and on-line by accessing the link below:

http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/1208?filter=DIA

Harassment of Students
Policies DH, DHB, FFG, FFH, FFI

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student’s parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. See Reporting Suspected Child Abuse, page 75 and Bullying, page 102 for additional information.

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

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

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

Prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student’s race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:
1. Affects a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities.

Prohibited harassment includes dating violence as defined by this policy.

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

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

1. A District employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
2. The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:
   a. Affects the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities; or
   b. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

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

“Solicitation of a romantic relationship” means deliberate or repeated acts that can be reasonably interpreted as the solicitation by an educator of a relationship with a student that is romantic in nature. A romantic relationship is often characterized by a strong emotional or sexual attachment and/or patterns of exclusivity, but does not include appropriate educator-student relationships that arise out of legitimate contexts such as familial connections or longtime acquaintance. The following acts, considered in context, may constitute prima facie evidence of the solicitation by an educator of a romantic relationship with a student:
1. Behavior, gestures, expressions, or communications with a student which are unrelated to the educator’s job duties and evidence of a romantic intent or interest in the student, including statements of love, affection, or attraction. Factors that may be considered in determining the romantic intent of such communications or behavior include:

   a. The nature of the communications;
   b. The timing of the communications;
   c. The extent of the communications;
   d. Whether the communications were made openly or secretly;
   e. The extent that the educator attempts to conceal the communications;
   f. If the educator claims to be counseling a student, SBEC may consider whether the educator’s job duties included counseling, whether the educator reported the subject of the counseling to the student’s guardians or to the appropriate school personnel, or, in the case of alleged abuse or neglect, whether the educator reported the abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities; and
   g. Any other evidence tending to show the context of the communications between educator and student.

2. Making inappropriate comments about a student’s body, creating or transmitting sexually suggestive photographs or images, or encouraging the student to transmit sexually suggestive photographs or images.
3. Making sexually demeaning comments to a student.
5. Requesting details of a student’s sexual history.
6. Requesting a date, sexual contact, or any activity intended for the sexual gratification of the educator.
7. Engaging in conversations regarding the sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party.
8. Inappropriate hugging, kissing, or excessive touching.
9. Providing the student with drugs or alcohol.
10. Suggestions that a romantic relationship is desired after the student graduates, including post-graduation plans for dating or marriage.
11. Any other acts tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with the student.

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

1. Affects a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities.

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

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

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

1. Affects a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities.

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

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

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

1. Affects a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities.

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

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

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

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

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

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another student has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, other District employee, or the appropriate District official listed in this policy.

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

For the purposes of this policy, District officials are the Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and the Superintendent. Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Title IX coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:
Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the ADA/Section 504 coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended:

Name: Flor Diaz  
Position: 504/Dyslexia, RTI Coordinator  
Address: 1702 Houston Street, Laredo, TX 78040  
Telephone: (956) 273-1781

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

Examples of corrective action may include a training program for those involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, counseling to the victim and the student who engaged in prohibited conduct, follow-up inquiries to determine if any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where harassment has occurred, and reaffirming the District’s policy against discrimination and harassment.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, as defined by policy FFI, the District official shall refer to FFI for appropriate notice to parents and District action. The District official shall refer to policy FDB for transfer provisions.

If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or other corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.
To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through policy FNG (LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level. A student shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

Retention of records shall be in accordance with policies FB (LOCAL) and CPC (LOCAL).

Information regarding this policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District’s Web site, to the extent practicable, and readily available at each campus and the District’s administrative offices.

The official policy can be accessed by clicking the link below:
http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/1208?filter=FFH

**Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

*Policies DG, FFG, GRA*

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect, as defined by Texas Family Code §261.001, to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services (CPS), or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. 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. Additionally, all child abuse and neglect cases reported on campus must be reported to the Human Resources Department by the campus administrator immediately.

Abuse is defined by SBEC and includes the following acts or omissions:

- Mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student’s or minor’s development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the student’s or minor’s development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Physical injury that results in substantial harm to a student or minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the student or minor, including an injury that
is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline; or

- Sexual conduct harmful to a student’s or minor’s mental, emotional, or physical welfare.

Employees are also required to make a report if they have 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 disabled person.

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made on-line at https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person or administrator to make the report.

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the district is prohibited from retaliating against an employee who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

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

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

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

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at the following link:


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 suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect following the procedures described above in Reporting Suspected Child Abuse.

Reporting Crime

Policy DG

The Texas Whistleblower Act protects district employees who make good faith reports of violations of law by the district to an appropriate law enforcement authority. The district is prohibited from suspending, terminating the employment of, or taking other adverse personnel action against, an employee who makes a report under the Act. State law also provides employees with the right to report a crime witnessed at the school to any peace officer with authority to investigate the crime.
Technology Resources

Policy CQ

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

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

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the technology resources are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use.

Employees are required to abide by the provisions of the acceptable use agreement and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary and legal action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the Technology Department at 956-273-1300.

The district’s electronic acceptable use policy (AUP) can be accessed online at L.I.S.D.’s Technology webpage or by clicking the link below:


Personal Use of Electronic Media

Policy DH, CQ, DH

Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), web logs (blogs), wikis, electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.
As role models for the district’s students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic 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 use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, meal times, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct district business. Supervisors reserve the right to revoke this privilege as deemed necessary.

- The employee shall not record conversations without the explicit permission of the other parties involved in the communication.

- The employee shall not take pictures of any school district employee or student without written consent of parent and/or employee. Pictures of employees without their consent can be taken only when the photographed employee is in the process of committing a crime or committing gross misconduct in the workplace.

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

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

**Electronic Communications between Employees, Students and Parents**

*Policy DH*

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the superintendent or a campus principal, may communicate through electronic media with students who are currently enrolled in the district. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. All other employees are prohibited from communicating with students who are enrolled in the district through electronic media.

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

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

The following definitions apply for 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), Web logs (blogs), wikis, electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram). *Electronic media* also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.

- **Communicate** means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee’s personal social network page or a blog) is not a communication; however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See Personal Use of Electronic Media, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a communication.

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

An employee who uses electronic media to communicate with students shall observe the following:

- The employee may only use the following forms of electronic media: text messaging, official district authorized email communication, official district authorized social network site. Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee designated in writing by the campus principal who has extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility and only to the extent absolutely necessary. In addition to texting the student, the teacher, trainer, or other employee shall also send the same text message to the parent/guardian, unless the parent/guardian does not have a cell phone. If other professional forms of communication are possible (i.e., written note or memorandum), the employee shall use such method of communication.

- An employee who communicates with a student using text messaging shall comply with the following protocol:
• The employee shall include at least one of the student’s parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message;

• The employee shall include his or her immediate supervisor as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and supervisor receive the same message; or

• For each text message addressed to one or more students, the employee shall send a copy of the text message to the employee’s district e-mail address.

Prohibited texting with students does not include the safe group texting site, Remind101 (https://www.remind101.com). Administrators, teachers, and counselors who do not have an extracurricular duty must use Remind 101 to communicate with students through text messaging, and the following must be observed:

• Group texting is intended for entire classes or entire extracurricular organizations.

• Employees must share the subscribing number and code with parents and encourage them to join the group.

• Groups should not be set up for communication between individuals.

• The remainder of the guidelines below in regards to communicating with students through social media must also be observed for Remind101 messages (i.e. the scope of the communication, the daily time frame allowed, no rights to privacy, following the Code of Ethics, etc.). Become familiar with all of the following guidelines. For questions or further clarification, ask the campus principal.

• In order to use any site other than Remind101 to text with students, request approval from the campus principal. The request and the approval must both be in writing.

• The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).

• The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page (“professional page”) for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee’s professional page.
• The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 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 [Policy CY]
  
  • Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DHB]

• 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 are not allowed as they cannot be preserved in accordance with the district’s record retention policy.

• An employee shall notify his or her supervisor in writing within one business day if a student engages in an improper communication with the employee. The employee should describe the form and content of the electronic communication.

Criminal History Background Checks

Policy DBAA

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

**Employee Arrests and Convictions**

*Policy DH*

An employee must notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor in writing using the Arrest/Conviction Report Form within three calendar days of any arrest or indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication including but not limited to:

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

All arrests/convictions will be reviewed by the Superintendent or designee for possible disciplinary action such as administrative leave, suspension or termination.
Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention

Policy DH

Laredo 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, including breaks or meal breaks while at school or at school-related activities during or outside of usual working hours or while operating a district issued vehicle or while conducting district business in a motor vehicle:

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.

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

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

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

As a condition of employment, an employee shall:

- Abide by the terms of this notice; and
- Notify the Superintendent, in writing, if the employee is convicted for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace.
[This notice complies with the requirements of the federal Drug-Free Workplace Act (41 U.S.C. 702).]

All fees or charges associated with drug/alcohol abuse counseling or rehabilitation shall be the responsibility of the employee.

**Tobacco Products and E-Cigarette Use**  
*Policies DH, FNCD, GKA*

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

Employees seeking a smoking break must adhere to the established break periods of the campus and department, not to exceed two breaks per day.

**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

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 proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interests of the district. This includes the following:

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

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

Gifts, Favors and Personal Financial Transactions
Policy DBD

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

Employees should refrain from participating in or engaging in personal financial transactions between co-workers, subordinates or supervisors such as the borrowing or lending of money for personal use.
Endorsements and Sales
Policy DBD

Employees may not recommend, endorse, or require students to purchase any product, material, or service in which the employee has a financial interest or that is sold by a company that employs or retains the District employee during non-school hours. No employee shall require students to purchase a specific brand of school supplies if other brands are equal and suitable for the intended instructional purpose.

Employees may not use his or her position with the District to attempt to sell products or services. 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.

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 are 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. This includes the selling of tickets during work time.

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

Policy DG

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

Safety

Policy CK series

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. See Emergencies on page 93 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.
- Wear a district-issued I.D. badge at all times on school property and while on school business.
- All personnel issued a school district building electronic access card is responsible for safeguarding it against loss or theft.
- Immediately report all types of threats to their supervisor or police.
- Avoid all types of cell phone usage while operating a district vehicle.
- Wear seat belts at all times while operating a district vehicle and while on district business in a personal vehicle.
- Avoid transporting any student, visitor, or employee to seek medical care or other emergency related issues. Call 911 for emergency services.
- Keep work areas clean and orderly at all times.
- Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor.
- Wear safety required personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times while working with risk items such as chemicals, solvents, heat, power tools, machinery, etc.
- Operate only equipment or machines for which they have training and authorization.
- Practice and participate in all safety drills.
- Conduct Parent/Teacher conferences at the school’s designated safe location such as a front conference room.
Additionally, for safety purposes, no employee shall use, sell, distribute, hold, or transport any type of drug, including alcohol and pharmaceutical drugs without proper legal prescriptions, at any time while on school property, on school business, while at any other school-related function or activity, or with students. See also Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention on page 83 for additional drug and alcohol policies.

**Emergencies.** Employees are required to become familiar with the District’s Emergency Operations Plan and understand its contents, including roles and expectations of all employees during an emergency event. The plan can be found on the L.I.S.D. homepage (http://www.laredoisd.org/) by clicking on “Emergency Procedures.” Employees are also required to practice and participate in all safety and emergency preparedness drills. In addition, codes such as color, name, person, or thing are not permitted to be used while communicating an emergency related incident to another employee, over the public announcement system (PA) or through the phones. Plain language should be used to ensure that communication is effective and understood by all participants. Police officers and emergency responders will utilize codes.

The District’s Emergency Operations Plan may also be accessed by clicking the link below:


Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the District Safety Office at 273-1171 or visit their webpage by clicking the following link. L.I.S.D.’s Standard Operating Safety Manual can also be found on the Safety and Occupational Health webpage.


**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 hear a weapon (such as gunshots) should observe the following:

- Escape (run or move) from the threat to a safe location if possible.
- Hide, if possible, and call 911 and L.I.S.D. police immediately.
- Silence all cell phones.
- On campuses, since phones can be used to make overhead public announcements (P.A.), if safe and possible, announce a lockdown in order to alert the campus of a danger.
- Follow lockdown procedures and stay locked-down until police or administration lifts the lockdown.

If an employee does not directly observe or hear a weapon but hears about a weapon from a student or staff member or suspects a weapon or other violation of the district’s weapons policy, the employee should observe the following:

- If safe and possible, take the person with the information to the principal’s office immediately to report the allegation.
- Stay next to the person until police interview them.
- Campus administration may enact the Campus Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.).
- Remember if there is an immediate danger, go somewhere safe and call 911.

Visitors in the Workplace
Policy GKC

All visitors, including family, ex-employees, ex-students, delivery personnel, and any non-district personnel, are expected to enter any district facility through the main entrance, report to the building’s main office, present identification (legal I.D.), and be scanned into the District visitor management system known as Raptor. Authorized visitors are required to be escorted to their destination and be accompanied throughout the entire visit. Employees will be called to escort their visitors. District support employees visiting campuses shall present their employee I.D. and wear it all times. 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. Supervisors reserve the right to limit visitors to employees when the business operations are affected. Employee’s children are not allowed in employee’s work areas for extended periods of time.

Employees seeking to be volunteers at any campus, are advised that all worked performed as a volunteer is not compensable. All employees must follow the volunteer procedures established by the Parent and Family Engagement Department and must obtain authorization prior to volunteering at any event.
**Asbestos Management Plan**  
*Policy CKA*

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

**Pest Control Treatment**  
*Policies CLB, DI*

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

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located areas accessible to all employees and visitors. 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.

**Mobile Technology Device Guidelines**

The use of wireless communication devices while driving district owned vehicles is strictly prohibited. If you receive a call while your vehicle is in motion safely pull over and off the road before responding.

The following are policy guidelines that must be strictly adhered to in order to minimize your exposure to potential danger and liability.

- Employees should comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding the use of mobile technology devices including cellular phones. The governors Highway Safety Association maintains a list of state and local restrictions on cellular phone use, refer to their website at: www.ghsa.org
• Use of hand held cellular phones while driving is strictly prohibited.
• Cellular phone calls using hands-free technology while driving is also discouraged. To minimize the impact of distraction, calls, if any, should be brief. Extended conversation shall not be made while driving.
• Sending or reading text messages or e-mails, dialing cellular phones, viewing television, videos or DVD’s and inputting data into laptop computers, personal digital assistants or navigation systems is prohibited while driving-CN (Local).

**Use of Personal Vehicles for School Business**

These guidelines are applicable to all employees who are authorized to operate personal vehicles for school business use. Each employee is responsible for ensuring that the minimum levels of statutory insurance requirements are met regarding their own personal vehicles.

**Vehicle Allowance Recipients:**

1. Employees must possess a valid Texas Driver’s License.
2. Employees must possess valid and current minimum levels of state required vehicle liability insurance.
3. Employees must submit current driver’s license and insurance documentation to the Risk Management and Safety Department on an on-going basis as expirations occur.
4. Forfeiture of car allowance stipends may occur if documentation is not submitted on a timely basis.
5. Employees should not use district vehicles to conduct district business if receiving a vehicle allowance.

**Mileage Reimbursement Receipts:**

1. Employees who do not receive car allowance, but are authorized to use their personal vehicles for school business use, may be reimbursed for vehicle travel expense from the appropriate campus or department budget.
2. Prior to use of personal vehicles for school business purposes, it is the responsibility of the campus or department administrator to ensure compliance by confirming and documenting employee’s Texas Driver’s License and minimum levels of state required vehicle liability insurance.
3. If minimum data is not available, employee may not be authorized to perform the job duties involving use of personal vehicle.
4. The mileage reimbursement process involves a T-4 payment request, detailed mileage, copy of employee’s valid Texas Driver’s License, and copy of “proof of vehicle insurance.”
Employees receiving compensation for mileage, are subject to a motor vehicle record review by the Risk Management and Safety Department. Risk Management and Safety Department reserves the right to revoke driving duties. If driving duties are an essential function of the job, the employee may be terminated from employment.

Absolutely, no employee may transport student(s) in their personal vehicles.
General Procedures

Bad Weather Closing

The district may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district’s facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late, to release students early, or to cancel school, district officials will post a notice on the district’s website www.laredoisd.org and notify the public via:

KGNS-TV
KLDO- TV
ITV
Radio stations will announce our closings if a DJ is on the air.
District School Messenger Automated calls and messages

Emergencies
Policies CKC, CKD

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

Purchasing Procedures
Policy CH

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the Procurement 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 Hector Mejia for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Human Resources Department if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, driver’s license or beneficiary. The form to process a change in personal information can be obtained from Human Resources.

Personnel Records
Policy DBA, GBA

Most district records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

- Address
- Phone number, including personal cell phone number
- Information that reveals whether they have family members
- Personal e-mail address

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

Facility Use
Policy DGA, GKD

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. Plant Facilities is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact Gustavo Alcantar at 273-1153 to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.
Termination of Employment

Resignations
Policy DFE

Contract Employees. Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received at least 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Superintendent or designee. Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the superintendent or the board of trustees. Resignation without consent may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the acts listed in Reports to the Texas Education Agency on page 96.

Noncontract Employees. Noncontract employees may resign their position at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Superintendent or designee at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

The Human Resources Department will advise the employee if the resignation has been accepted.

Withdrawal of Resignation. Once submitted and accepted, the resignation of an employee may not be withdrawn without consent of the Superintendent. As per our guidelines, an employee’s request to rescind his or her resignation may be considered by the Superintendent or designee only when:

- The resignation has not been approved by the Superintendent or designee.
- The position is still available; and
- The principal or director approves the withdrawal request.

Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees
Policies DFAA, DFAB, DFBA, DFBB, DFD, DFF, DFFA, DFFB, DFFC

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be nonrenewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The timelines and procedures to be followed when a
Suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee. Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when the employee’s certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the timelines and procedures can be found in the DF series policies that are provided to employees or are available online.

**Dismissal of Noncontract Employees**  
*Policy DCD*

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See *Complaints and Grievances*, page 53.)

**Exit Interviews and Procedures**

Exit interviews will be scheduled for all employees leaving the district. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the district with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the district with feedback on his or her employment experience. All district keys, district identification and access cards, books, property, including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment. The Employee Clearance Form will document such clearance from the district.

**Reports to Texas Education Agency**  
*Policy DF, DHB*

The dismissal of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA whenever the termination is based on evidence that the employee was involved in any of the following:

- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other unlawful conduct with a student or a minor
• Soliciting or engaging in sexual contact or a romantic relationship with a student or minor

• The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance

• The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of district or school property or funds

• An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation

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

The superintendent is also required to notify TEA when a certified employee resigns and there is evidence the educator engaged in the conduct listed above.

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

**Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding**

The district is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance to the court and the individual receiving the support (Texas Family Code §§8.210, 158.211). Notice of the following must be sent to the court and support recipient:

• Termination of employment not later than the seventh day after the date of termination

• Employee’s last known address

• Name and address of the employee’s new employer, if known
Student Issues

Equal Educational Opportunities
Policies FB, FFH

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

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

Student Records
Policy FL

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

- Parents: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights

- The student: The rights of parents transfer to a student who turns 18 or is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. A district is not prohibited from granting the student access to the student’s records before this time.

- School officials with legitimate educational interests

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the Office of Communications at 273-1730 for assistance.
Parent and Student Complaints
Policy FNG

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

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teacher or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved to their satisfaction should be directed to the campus principal. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with a principal’s response. The complaint form is found in the district’s website and maybe accessed by clicking the link below:


Administering Medication to Students
Policy FFAC

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

Dietary Supplements
Policies DH, FFAC

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

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

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

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

Student Conduct and Discipline
Policies in the FN series and FO series

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

Under no circumstances should students be recorded or photographed by the use of audio, video or cellular devices.

General guidelines employees of the district shall adhere to when imposing discipline are as follows:

1. A student shall be disciplined when necessary to improve the student’s behavior, to maintain order, or to protect other students, school employees, or property.
2. A student shall be treated fairly and equitably. Discipline shall be based on an assessment of the circumstances of each case. Factors to consider shall include:
   a. The seriousness of the offense;
   b. The student’s age;
   c. The frequency of misconduct;
   d. The student’s attitude;
   e. The potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment;
   f. Requirements of Chapter 37 of the Education Code; and
   g. The Student Code of Conduct adopted by the Board;
h. Texas Criminal Laws.

3. Before a student under 18 is assigned to detention outside regular school hours, notice shall be given to the student’s parent to inform him or her of the reason for the detention and permit arrangements for necessary transportation.

Physical Restraint. Within the scope of an employee’s duties, a District employee may physically restrain a student if the employee reasonably believes restraint is necessary in order to:

1. Protect a person, including the person using physical restraint, from physical injury.
2. Obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object.
3. Remove a student refusing a lawful command of a school employee from a specific location, including a classroom or other school property, in order to restore order, and to impose disciplinary measures.
4. Control an irrational student.
5. Protect property from serious damage.

Extracurricular Standards of Behavior. With the approval of the principal, Athletic Director and Superintendent, sponsors and coaches of extracurricular activities may develop and enforce standards of behavior that are higher than the District-developed Student Code of Conduct and may condition membership or participation in the activity on adherence to those standards. Extracurricular standards of behavior may take into consideration conduct that occurs at any time, on or off school property. Extracurricular behavioral standards shall not have the effect of discriminating on the basis of gender, race, color, disability, religion, ethnicity, or national origin.

A student shall be informed of any extracurricular behavior standards at the beginning of each school year or when the student first begins participation in the activity. A student and his or her parent shall sign and return to the sponsor or coach a statement that they have read the extracurricular behavior standards and consent to them as a condition of participation in the activity.

Standards of behavior for an extracurricular activity are independent of the Student Code of Conduct. Violations of these standards of behavior that are also violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in independent disciplinary actions.

A student may be removed from participation in extracurricular activities or may be excluded from school honors for violation of extracurricular standards of behavior for an activity or for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.
Student Attendance

Policy FEB

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the district’s policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require minor students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student upon returning to school, must they must follow the procedures outlined in the student outlined in the LISD Student Code of Conduct. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

Bullying

Policy FFI

All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying to campus administrator. The district’s policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and is reprinted below:

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

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

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

This conduct is considered bullying if it:

1. Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
2. Interferes with a student’s education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

Bullying of a student may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.
The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation. Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

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

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

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

To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee.

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

A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.

The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.

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

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

If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District’s Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action.

The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.

Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine if any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District’s policy against bullying.

The principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.

The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.

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

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

Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).
This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District’s website, to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District’s administrative offices.

The official policy can be accessed by clicking the link below:
http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/1208?filter=FFI

**Hazing**  
*Policy FNCC*

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