



**2020-2021 Lasara ISD  
Employee Handbook**

# Lasara ISD Employee Handbook

2020-21 School Year

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of a disability, please contact [wbardwell@lasaraisd.net](mailto:wbardwell@lasaraisd.net) or (956) 642-5466.

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# Employee Handbook Receipt

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Campus/Department \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

***For electronic copy, visit [www.lasaraisd.net](http://www.lasaraisd.net).***

Please indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box below:

- I choose to receive the employee handbook in electronic format and accept responsibility for accessing it according to the instructions provided.
- I choose to receive a hard copy of the employee handbook and understand I am required to contact \_\_\_\_\_ to obtain 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 superintendent's office if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign and date this receipt and forward it to William Bardwell, District Principal.

# Introduction

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

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.lasaraisd.net](http://www.lasaraisd.net).



# District Information

## Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

The District's mission is to educate and nurture all students by embracing diversity, protecting human rights, strengthening moral values and offering excellent quality services. Each District student will be prepared to succeed intellectually, live morally, lead courageously, act responsibly, and serve generously.

1. LISD will provide an educational experience that produces well rounded students that are prepared to succeed after graduation by providing them with holistic learning experiences.
2. LISD will maintain and support the highest quality staff that is accountable, professional and respectful to all stakeholders.
3. LISD will maximize potential funding sources through sound fiscal practices and will seek innovative funding opportunities.

## Board of Trustees

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 biennially and serve four-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

- Sylvia Perez
- Micaela Alaniz
- Margot Salinas
- Eloy Castañeda
- Isidro Robles
- Miguel Salinas
- Rolando Velázquez

The board usually meets on the second Monday of each month at the Lasara ISD Library. In the event that large attendance is anticipated, the board may meet at the Lasara ISD Cafeteria. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and the administration office 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.

## **Board Meeting Schedule**

<i><b>August 17, 2020</b></i>	<i><b>February 8, 2021</b></i>
<i><b>September 14, 2020</b></i>	<i><b>March 8, 2021</b></i>
<i><b>October 12, 2020</b></i>	<i><b>April 12, 2021</b></i>
<i><b>November 9, 2020</b></i>	<i><b>May 10, 2021</b></i>
<i><b>December 14, 2020</b></i>	<i><b>June 14, 2021</b></i>
<i><b>January 11, 2021</b></i>	<i><b>July 12, 2021</b></i>

## Administration

Alejos Salazar, Jr. – Superintendent of Schools.....[asalazar@lasaraisd.net](mailto:asalazar@lasaraisd.net)

Roger Cantu – Business Manager.....[rocantu@lasaraisd.net](mailto:rocantu@lasaraisd.net)

Cynthia Ramos – C&I Director/Federal Programs.....[cramos@lasaraisd.net](mailto:cramos@lasaraisd.net)

Joanna Gomez – GearUP Facilitator.....[jgomez@lasaraisd.net](mailto:jgomez@lasaraisd.net)

Alexandria Lupercio – ProjectRise Instructional Coach.....[alupercio@lasaraisd.net](mailto:alupercio@lasaraisd.net)

Karen McInnis – District Counselor.....[kmcinnis@lasaraisd.net](mailto:kmcinnis@lasaraisd.net)

William Bardwell – District Principal.....[wbardwell@lasaraisd.net](mailto:wbardwell@lasaraisd.net)



# Employment

## Equal Employment Opportunity

*Policies DAA, DIA*

Lasara 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 relating to discrimination for any of the reasons listed above should contact Alejos Salazar, Superintendent of Schools.

## Job Vacancy Announcements

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

## Employment after Retirement

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](http://www.trs.texas.gov)).

## Contract and Noncontract Employment

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 noninstructional administrators) are not employed by contract. 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**

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

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

the human resources office if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

## **Recertification of Employment Authorization**

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 superintendent's office if you have any questions regarding reverification of employment authorization.

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

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

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

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted following accidents. Return-to-duty and follow-up testing will be

conducted if an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs is allowed to return to duty.

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug testing policies and related educational material should contact the superintendent's office.

## **Health Safety Training**

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 human resource office by the first day of school.

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

## **Reassignments and Transfers**

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

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. A teacher requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit his or her request at any time during the school year



that a vacancy exists or a new position is available. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the human resource office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

## **Workload and Work Schedules**

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

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

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

**Teacher's Schedule.** Teachers are required to clock in for work by 7:30 a.m. each morning. After school, teachers are to walk students to their assigned duty location and remain with the students until the buses leave campus or the parent drop off area is clear of students. Elementary teachers will remain on campus until 3:45 p.m. while middle school and high school teachers remain on campus until 4:00 p.m.

**Paraprofessional Schedule.** Paraprofessionals are to clock in by 7:15 a.m. each morning, reporting to their assigned duty area, unless their schedule was modified by an administrator. Paraprofessionals are to remain on campus until 3:45 p.m. at the elementary campus, or 4:00 at the middle school and high school campuses, unless their schedules was modified by an administrator.

**Morning Procedures.** All students are to report directly to the cafeteria as they arrive at school. Breakfast will be served in the classroom from 7:30 a.m.-7:50 a.m.

**Announcements.** Morning announcements will begin by 7:50 a.m. Students should be ready to participate, daily, in saying the pledge of allegiance, the Texas pledge of allegiance, and singing the Star-Spangled Banner or they may observe a moment of silence. Announcements concerning staff will be provided through email. Announcement requests should be submitted at least 24 hours in advance.

## **Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk**

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.

## **Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications**

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. This notice is not required if parental notice under ESSA is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call the superintendent's office.

## **Outside Employment and Tutoring**

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.

## **Performance Evaluation**

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**

At both the campus and district levels, Lasara 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 William Bardwell, District Principal.

## **Staff Development**

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

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

# **Compensation and Benefits**

## **Salaries, Wages, and Stipends**

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

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

Employees should contact the business office 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.

The schedule of pay dates for the 2019-2020 school year follows:

<b>2020-2021 PAY SCHEDULE</b>			
<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Pay Date</b>
6/7/20	7/11/20	7/13/20	7/20/20
7/12/20	8/8/20	8/10/20	8/20/20
8/9/20	9/5/20	9/7/20	9/18/20
9/6/20	10/3/20	10/5/20	10/20/20
10/4/20	11/7/20	11/9/20	11/20/20
11/8/20	12/5/20	12/7/20	12/18/20
12/6/20	1/9/21	1/11/21	1/20/21
1/10/21	2/6/21	2/8/21	2/19/21
2/7/21	3/6/21	3/8/21	3/19/21
3/7/21	4/3/21	4/5/21	4/20/21
4/4/21	5/8/21	5/10/21	5/20/21
5/9/21	6/5/21	6/7/21	6/18/21
6/6/21	7/10/21	7/12/21	7/20/21
7/11/21	8/7/21	8/9/21	8/20/21
8/8/21	9/4/21	9/6/21	9/20/21

## 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 business office for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

## **Payroll Deductions**

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

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

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

## **Overtime Compensation**

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

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

## **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor and superintendent must give approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by the district. Employees must submit receipts, to the extent possible, to be reimbursed for allowable expenses other than mileage.

## **Health, Dental, and Life Insurance**

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

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

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

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each year or when they experience a qualifying event (e.g., marriage, divorce, birth). Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact the business office for more information.

## **Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for vision, dental, disability, cancer, and life. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the business office 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**

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from TASB, effective upon full-time employment.

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

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the business office. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code.

## **Unemployment Compensation Insurance**

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

## **Teacher Retirement**

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the business office as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web ([www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov)).

# Leaves and Absences

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 business office for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums, and requirements for communicating with the district.

Paid leave must be used in 2-hour increments. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state and local leave. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order:

- Local Leave
- Sick Leave

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

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

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

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

**Medical Certification.** Any employee, who is absent more than 5 days because of a personal or family illness, must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and—in the case of personal illness—the employee's fitness to return to work.

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

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

Under TRS-Active Care rules, an employee is no longer eligible for insurance through the district after six months of unpaid leave other than FML. If an employee's unpaid leave extends for more than six months, the district will provide the employee with notice of COBRA rights.

## Personal Leave

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of 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 3 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.

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

## **State Sick Leave**

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State sick leave can be used only in 2-hour increments, except when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis or when coordinated with workers’ compensation benefits.

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

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

## **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;
- For qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military member who is the employee’s spouse, child, or parent.

An eligible employee who is a covered servicemember’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 servicemember 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.

An employer may not interfere with an individual’s FMLA rights or retaliate against someone for using or trying to use FMLA leave, opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA, or being involved in any proceeding under or related to the FMLA.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

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

- Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months;
- Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before taking leave;\* 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:

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

## Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions

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

**Use of Paid Leave.** FML runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability 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 business office for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **Temporary Disability Leave**

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

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

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

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



## **Workers' Compensation Benefits**

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

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

## **Assault Leave**

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An incident involving an assault is a work-related injury and should be immediately reported to the superintendent's office.

An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person nonresponsible for purposes of criminal liability.

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

## **Bereavement Leave**

Use of local sick leave for death in the immediate family shall not exceed five workdays per occurrence.

## **Jury Duty**

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

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

## **Compliance with a Subpoena**

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

## **Truancy Court Appearances**

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

## **Religious Observance**

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

## **Military Leave**

**Paid Leave for Military Service.** Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized Urban Search and Rescue Team is entitled to paid leave when engaged in authorized training or duty 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 the human resource office. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years.

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

## **Leaves and Absences**

**Absence from duty.** Absence from duty forms are available in the office and must be completed by employees upon return to work.

**Emergency substitute folder.** In addition to regular lesson plans, every teacher will keep a substitute folder in the office file. The substitute folder should be updated periodically and should contain class roster, daily schedule, student assignments, appropriate extra work/activities, necessary information on accommodations/modifications, etc. Substitute folders must be updated every six weeks or after each absence.

# **Employee Relations and Communications**

## **Employee Recognition and Appreciation**

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

## **District Communications**

Throughout the school year, the district publishes newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements. They include the following:

*Lasara ISD Website*

*District and Campus Marquees*

*One Call Communication*

*Willacy Chronicle*

*Valley Morning Star*

*District Newsletter*

*Social Media*

# Complaints and Grievances

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

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

*Please see: [https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=DGBA\(LOCAL\).pdf](https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=DGBA(LOCAL).pdf)*

# Employee Conduct and Welfare

## Standards of Conduct

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

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

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

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

## *Texas Educators' Code of Ethics*

### **Purpose and Scope**

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

### **Enforceable Standards**

#### **1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Standard 1.9** The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, 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.

## Dress and Grooming

All employees of the District are expected to be well groomed and properly attired at all times. It is the intent that the appearance of all personnel reflects the high quality of our school and community. In keeping with this objective, desirable dress and grooming is determined by neatness, cleanliness appropriate selection of clothing, and freedom from distraction of the learning process. Employees whose job description does not include contact with students will have their dress code approved by their supervisor. Employees are expected to adhere to the following standard of dress and grooming:

1. All staff members are expected to exhibit exemplary grooming where hair length and styling are concerned.
2. Male staff members shall be clean-shaven, with the exception of neatly trimmed mustaches and beards.
3. All shirt tails will be worn tucked in.
4. Denim jeans, any color, or shorts shall not be worn, unless pre-approved by the superintendent or his/her designee on special occasions. No faded, torn or tattered jeans will be allowed. Jeans can only be worn on Fridays with a Lasara spirit shirt. Capri pants are allowed.
5. Dresses, skirts, and other apparel must touch the knees while standing.
6. Flip flops and rubber shower shoes are not acceptable footwear, unless pre-approved by the superintendent or his designee on special occasions. Only footwear manufactured with a back strap will be allowed.
7. Apparel of any kind, having obscene slogans, political endorsements, endorsements of any alcoholic beverages or tobacco products, emblems, or writing that is deemed inappropriate by the supervisor shall not be worn.
8. No tattoos, either permanent or temporary, are permitted. Bandages used to cover up any visible tattoos are not permitted. All tattoos MUST be covered at all times by wearing long sleeve shirts and or pants.
9. No visible body piercing is permitted.
10. The superintendent or his/her designee will make the final decision as to the appropriate dress.

## **Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**

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.

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:

*Please see: [https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=DIA\(LOCAL\).pdf](https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=DIA(LOCAL).pdf)*

## **Harassment of Students**

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.

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

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

1. Behavior, gestures, expressions, or communications with a student that are unrelated to the educator's job duties and evidence a romantic intent or interest in the student, including statements of love, affection, or attraction. Factors that may be considered in determining the romantic intent of such communications or behavior include:
  - a. The nature of the communications;
  - b. The timing of the communications;
  - c. The extent of the communications;
  - d. Whether the communications were made openly or secretly;
  - e. The extent that the educator attempts to conceal the communications;
  - f. If the educator claims to be counseling a student, SBEC may consider whether the educator's job duties included counseling, whether the educator reported the subject of the counseling to the student's guardians or to the appropriate school personnel, or, in the case of alleged abuse or neglect, whether the educator reported the abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities; and
  - g. Any other evidence tending to show the context of the communications between educator and student.
2. Making inappropriate comments about a student's body, creating or transmitting sexually suggestive photographs or images, or encouraging the student to transmit sexually suggestive photographs or images.
3. Making sexually demeaning comments to a student.
4. Making comments about a student's potential sexual performance.
5. Requesting details of a student's sexual history.
6. Requesting a date, sexual contact, or any activity intended for the sexual gratification of the educator.
7. Engaging in conversations regarding the sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party.
8. Inappropriate hugging, kissing, or excessive touching.
9. Providing the student with drugs or alcohol.
10. Violating written directives from school administrators regarding the educator's behavior toward a student.

11. Suggestions that a romantic relationship is desired after the student graduates, including post-graduation plans for dating or marriage.
12. Any other acts tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with the student.

19 TAC 249.3(51)

*Please see: [https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=FFH\(LOCAL\).pdf](https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=FFH(LOCAL).pdf)*

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

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.

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 person with a disability.

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

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

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

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are

no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agency.

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

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

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at [https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=FFH\(LOCAL\).pdf](https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=FFH(LOCAL).pdf). 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**

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

## **Scope and Sequence**

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

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

## **Technology Resources**

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 district's acceptable use agreement and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary and legal action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the technology coordinator.

## **Personal Use of Electronic Communications**

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

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 \_ (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.
- 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 *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**

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

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

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

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

- *Electronic communications* means any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes e-mail, text messages, instant messages, and any communication made through an Internet website, including a social media website or a social networking website.
- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes 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 communicates electronically with students shall observe the following:

- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students using any form of electronic communications, including mobile and web applications, that are not provided or accessible by the district unless a specific exception is noted below.
- Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility. An employee who communicates with a student using text messaging shall comply with the following protocol:
  - The employee shall include at least one of the student’s parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message;
- The employee shall 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 supervisor in writing within one business day if a student engages in an improper electronic communication with the employee. The employee should describe the form and content of the electronic communication.

## **Public Information on Private Devices**

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

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

## **Criminal History Background Checks**

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**

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

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

Moral turpitude includes the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft
- Misrepresentation
- Deliberate violence

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

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

Lasara 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:

*Please see: [https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=DH\(LOCAL\).pdf](https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=DH(LOCAL).pdf)*

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

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.

## **Fraud and Financial Impropriety**

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**

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

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

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

## **Gifts and Favors**

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

## **Copyrighted Materials**

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**

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

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

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

## **Charitable Contributions**

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**

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

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

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

While driving on district business, employees are required to abide by all state and local traffic laws. Employees driving on district business are prohibited from texting and using other electronic devices that require both visual and manual attention while the vehicle is in motion. Employees will exercise care and sound judgment on whether to use hands-free technology while the vehicle is in motion.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact their immediate supervisor.

## **Possession of Firearms and Weapons**

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs, or other prohibited weapons onto school



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

## **Visitors in the Workplace**

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

## **Asbestos Management Plan**

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

## **Pest Control Treatment**

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

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

# General Procedures

## Emergency School Closing

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

***KRGV/KGBT Television stations/District Website/Social Media/One Call***

## Emergencies

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

## Emergency Plans

**Bomb Threat.** A threat to the welfare and safety of our children has been evident in all areas of the nation and it could happen here. We refer to the telephone call, which conveys the threat of a hidden bomb set to explode at a given time. This call cannot be ignored, but it must be handled with care so as to avoid undue concern among students and parents.

1. The person receiving the call should try to remember the voice characteristics of the person making the call.
2. A fire drill should be given immediately so that the building can be cleared. This drill should be considered just as a regular fire drill and nothing should be said about a bomb threat.
3. The superintendent of Schools should be called.
4. After the building has been searched by the appropriate authorities, and no bomb has been found, the children may return to the building and classes may resume. This

procedure should guarantee the safety of our students while protecting the community from undue alarm.

**Fire Drills.** Fire Drills will be conducted throughout the school year. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that the following conditions exist during the fire drill:

1. All students are well-acquainted with the fire plan and how to properly exit the classroom.
2. Students should recognize the fire drill signals.
  - a. Fire – Long Buzzing Sound
  - b. Intercom Signal – all clear, students may return to class.
3. Students should exit the building in an orderly and calm fashion.
4. Teacher has his/her grade book in his/her possession.
5. Students are quiet and calm during the fire drill.
6. Teacher and students report immediately to pre-designated safety area.
7. Air-condition unit is turned off if applicable.
8. Lights are off.
9. Windows are closed.
10. Door is closed, but not locked!
11. Ensure that no one goes back into the room for personal effects, etc.
12. Teachers should call roll once the designated area has been reached.

**Tornado.** The following procedure is to be used when pupils are retained at school because of a natural disaster, such as tornadoes or hail. When the alert is given:

1. In the event of a tornado, windows and doors facing the wind should be left closed. On the side away from the wind, all windows should be left half open and doors closed in order to equalize pressure.
2. Pupils in Pre-K – 12th shall exit classrooms into the closest hallway and sit on the floor and hold their heads between their knees with hands clasped behind their necks.
3. Teachers should be prepared to supervise activities requiring small amounts of energy to keep pupils occupied.
4. It would be highly desirable for the school to have a portable radio (battery operated) to maintain contact with the Emergency Operations Center.

### **Shelter in Place for Danger in the Building**

A. Applies to any situation where the presence of an intruder may cause eminent danger.

B. Procedures for activation:

1. P.A. announcement will be as follows: “Shelter in Place”
2. Procedures to follow once the announcement has been made:
  - a. All staff will stay cool, calm, and collected.
  - b. Account for all your students.
  - c. Lock your classroom/office door.

- d. Everyone must sit against a wall that is least visible from windows.
  - e. Turn lights off.
  - f. Suspend hall passes, visitations, and pick-up and delivery of students.
  - g. Stand by for further instructions.
  - h. Notify the office for any unusual activity.
  - i. Administrators will monitor hallways for students and staff that are outside of the classroom.
  - j. We will ensure that all campus personnel have been notified (gym, portables, pavilion, maintenance, Learning Community Resource Center, Administrative Building.)
- C. Procedures for Deactivation
- 1. P.A. Announcement will be as follows: "Shelter in Place has been cancelled."
    - a. Resume normal operations.

**Locked Perimeter Doors.** All perimeter doors must remain locked to prevent outside entry. The only door that will have outside entry will be the front lobby.

## **EDUCATIONAL TRIPS**

All classes will be allowed to take at least one one-day trip during the school year. All trip itineraries must be submitted by the sponsor and approved by administration two weeks before the trip takes place. Trips are to be undertaken as an educational extension to curricular instruction. Any time a class has a scheduled trip; it will be the responsibility of the sponsor to furnish the office and cafeteria with a typed list of the students that will be going. Other than regularly scheduled athletic contests, written permission from the parents is required. The note to the parent should have the following information included:

1. Time of departure
2. Mode of transportation
3. Approximate time of arrival home
4. Notification to parents of required items for the trip, such as cameras, money, personal items, etc.
5. Stated purpose, goal, and instructional learning objectives for this trip.
6. Cafeteria Meal Form

Overnight trips must be approved by the school board. Other special requests must be submitted to the superintendent for consideration.

## **Purchasing Procedures**

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

**PURCHASE ORDERS.** All purchases of any nature are to be made only with proper purchase orders. A number is assigned and funds encumbered when a purchase order is processed. Payment of any purchase made without prior issuance of purchase order number will be the responsibility of the teacher, not the school district. All requests for purchases by the school faculty will be made directly to their supervisor. Do not charge items and have bills sent to the school without first receiving approval.

## **Name and Address Changes**

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the human resource office and business office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. The form to process a change in personal information can be obtained from the human resource office.

## **Personnel Records**

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

Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

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

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

## **Facility Use**

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The business office is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the business office to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

## **Fundraising**

The purpose of fundraising activities is to teach our children the importance of earning financial means through organization, preparation, and cooperation in an effort to obtain or achieve a common goal. The principal must approve all fundraising projects. Fund raising projects will be approved for clubs, organizations, classrooms, and grade levels on first come first served basis, agreed among the sponsors/teachers and the principal. No use of instructional time for fund raising is allowed. Requesting of financial donations from local businesses such as HEB or Wal-Mart is not allowed. Raffles may be no longer than two weeks in length. Sponsors are responsible for their club or organization profits/expenses.

## **PROCEDURES FOR DEPOSITING ALL STUDENT ACTIVITY FUNDS**

In an effort to streamline the depositing of monies raised by the student activity sponsors, while also improving accuracy and minimizing the number of people handling money, the Lasara ISD Business Office is tentatively piloting a new process in conjunction with BBVA Compass consultation and buy-in.

1. All student activity sponsors will be provided with a pre-printed see through two sectioned sealable money slips (18in x 10in), which the Business Office will purchase. This one-time sealable money slip will be the ONLY slip allowable for deposit use.
2. The money will be counted by the sponsor, and the outside of the money slip completed (i.e., sponsor name, sponsor accounting number, dollar amounts, etc...) to match the currency/checks within.

3. The top section labeled “*Insert Currency*” must contain only currency (coins and dollar bills). The bottom section labeled “*Insert Checks and Deposit Slip*” must contain only checks and the deposit slip.

**NOTE:** Each of the money slip sections has a separate amount field. The top section should be the currency figure, and the bottom section should be the check figure, in addition to the preprinted Lasara ISD Student Account deposit slip, which the Business Office will also provide.

4. Prior to sealing the money slip, the sponsor **MUST** make a copy of the completed deposit slip for their records, until a BBVA Compass date stamped receipt is obtained from the bank after the deposit run. Please make sure the assigned sponsor accounting code is noted on the deposit slip.

5. The money slip is sealed on both sections and dropped off at Mrs. Davila’s office safe for safe keeping until the sponsor can make their way over to the Business Office.

6. The sponsor comes to the Business Office to see Tax Assessor Collector Elvia Robles for money drop off.

7. Mrs. Robles will take the sealed money slip and make an entry in her deposit log, and then have the sponsor initial the entry made. All sealed money slips will be locked in the Business Office safe for safe keeping until a deposit run is made.

8. The Business Office runner makes a deposit run and hands over the sealed money slips to the bank teller. If the money within does not match the completed deposit slip, the bank tellers have been instructed to simply return the un-deposited money slip back to the sponsor so the process begins from scratch.

9. Money slips whose deposits are in balance and accepted by the bank will have the date stamped bank receipt routed back to the sponsor for their records. The original date stamped back receipt will go to Ninfa Zamora for entry in the TxEIS Accounting System.

10. Whether deposits are accepted or not by the bank, the Business Office will make a notation (deposit accepted or not) and date the new receipt logbook, and route a carbon copy to the sponsor who submitted the deposit for their records.

## Dismissal Procedures

**Bus Area:** The procedure for *bus students* will be as follows:

1. Students riding the bus will be placed by the classroom teacher at the front of the line prior to dismissal time.
2. Assigned paraprofessionals will be assisting in the cafetorium. Please assure your students are in their assigned holding area.
3. All bus students will wait in the cafetorium until the assigned bus driver is ready to depart and then the bus students will walk to the bus.

Using this procedure, we should be able to properly supervise our bus students, have a centralized holding area and create an environment of comfort until it is time to travel home. The safety of our children has always been a top priority. We want to continue the safest environment that we can possibly provide.

### Car Riders and Walkers

- Each homeroom teacher in grades PK – 6th will walk his/her classes out of the building through the designated door. Grades 6 –12 will be dismissed by last designated teacher.
- All teachers will supervise students as they wait for parents, siblings, etc.
- Do not release students to parents or siblings who are in the building without permission. All students are to be released to the person listed on the student card, unless prior arrangements have been made through the office.
- If parents become abusive, please contact the office. Give the office a name and/or license plate number so that we can take action.
- All students being picked up (not walking, or riding the bus) should be released to the parent directly. Parents can park and walk up or, if they prefer to wait in the car, they can form one line such that they can pick up the child at the curb. Please make sure students are released to appropriate person listed on student card, unless prior arrangements have been made through the office.
- After dismissal, students are not to reenter the building. Parents who wish to enter the building must enter through the front doors and sign in at the office.
- At **3:45 p.m.** the Instructional Assistants/Teachers on duty will bring all students who have not been picked up to the office. The Instructional Assistant will:
  1. Contact parent(s);
  2. Contact the office 15 minutes before planning to leave to let the office know the student(s) have been picked up.



## **Messages and Personal Calls**

We discourage incoming personal phone calls throughout the school work day. School telephones are for the business of the school. Only emergency or high priority messages will be given immediately. Otherwise, messages will be placed in your mailbox. Please do not make personal phone calls during the instructional day. Teachers are not to leave their students to make a personal call. If it is necessary for you to make a call during class time, contact the office for someone to attend your class. This also applies to teachers with teacher assistants. If a confidential call needs to be made, check with the office staff as to the availability of a phone.

## **Mailbox check**

Teachers should check their mailboxes twice each day. Telephone messages, mail, and memos will be placed in the boxes as they are received. Announcements for the teachers will also be placed there. Students are not allowed in the teacher's mail area unless supervised by an administrator.

## **Lasara ISD TimeClock Plus Procedures**

Lasara ISD implemented TimeClock Plus throughout the entire district October 2010, for the purpose of compensating all district employees, salaried and hourly alike. TimeClock Plus is the only tool of choice for compensation, thus the reason for listing the processes and procedures that will ensure accurate compensation. NOTE: All TimeClock issues encountered will be addressed and resolved by your direct report. All time and leave issues for all employees will be addressed via direct access to each employee's timesheet.

### **EMPLOYEE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES:**

1. Utilize the front office TimeClock to clock in via your fingerprint when you come in. On days when you are running behind and getting to your job is priority one, you can use the onscreen TimeClock on your computer to clock in.
2. If you run into a problem where you forget to clock in or out, email your direct supervisor the day you encountered the problem allowing them to make the necessary entries the same day as well.
3. FYI – When an employee forgets to clock in or out, when they attempt to use the TimeClock the following day, the system will ask if you forgot to punch in or out the previous day. Simply answer the question on the TimeClock.
4. On days when an employee was absent the previous day, be sure and pick up an "Absent from Duty" form when you clock in. At the end of the work day when you go clock out, drop off the completed "Absent from Duty" form at the school front office.
5. For those employees who are conducting extra duty tutoring for Lasara ISD, you must be diligent and accurate in the switching/selecting of job code 999. In addition to the

- switching of job code, the employee must turn all tutoring supporting documentation (i.e., date, subject, grade level, student names) associated with the tutoring sessions
6. For those employees who attend workshops under Project RISE, you must be diligent and accurate in the switching/selecting of the appropriate Project RISE job codes.
  7. At the end of each day or at the end of each work week at a minimum, it is recommended that each employee review their individual timesheets and communicate any discrepancies to your direct supervisor via email if at all possible to ensure an audit trail. During the review process, the objective is for the employee to approve all their time.
  8. Remember to keep the 2019-2020 Pay Schedule deadlines in the forefront.

## **LESSON PLANS**

Every teacher in school is expected plan their daily lessons. Daily and weekly lesson plans are a must and should correlate with the semester outline for the course taught. Directed, correlated planning should, in no way, restrict the initiative, imagination, or improvisation of the teacher. Lesson plans should be up to date and available for review.

- Lesson Plans for each week will be written and available on Eduphoria by the beginning of the instructional week.
- Emergency substitute lesson plans will be on file in the office.
- Plans must specify an objective, activity(s), and the method of evaluation. Objectives must correlate to the TEKS, STAAR and District Curriculum. Documentation of differentiated instructional strategies utilized for ESL, GT, Special Ed, and at-risk students must be included in lesson plans.
- A copy of your weekly lesson plan is due by 10:00 a.m. every Monday morning. Please post lesson plans on the inside of your door. Lesson Plans are considered important documentation. Lesson plans must be kept neat and up-to-date.
- Students who are failing any course of study must be provided tutoring. Tutoring must be documented in your lesson plans.
- Modifications in instruction must be documented in your lesson plans.

# Termination of Employment

## Resignations

**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 human resource office. Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the superintendent or the board of trustees. Resignation without consent may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's resignation within seven days following an alleged incident of misconduct. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in of the same acts.

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

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

## Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

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**

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.

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

## **Discharge of Convicted Employees**

The district shall discharge any employee who has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for an offense requiring the registration as a sex offender or convicted of a felony under Title 5 Penal Code if the victim was a minor.

If the offense is more than 30 years before the date the person's employment began or the person satisfied all terms of the court order entered on conviction the requirement to discharge does not apply.

## **Exit Interviews and Procedures**

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, books, property, including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment.

## Reports to Texas Education Agency

Certified Employees. The resignation or termination of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA if there is evidence that the employee was involved in any of the following:

- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other unlawful conduct with a student or a minor
- Soliciting or engaging in sexual contact or a romantic relationship with a student or minor
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of district or school property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation
- Committing a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on district property or at a school-sponsored event

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

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

## Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

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

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

# Student Issues

## Equal Educational Opportunities

Lasara 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 of students based on any of the reasons listed above should be directed to Alejos Salazar, Superintendent of Schools.

## Student Records

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 principal's office for assistance.

## Parent and Student Complaints

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

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

## **Administering Medication to Students**

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**

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**

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**

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.

### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

In order to have appropriate, pro-social behavior from all students, we must provide clear, understandable guidelines and expectations for behavior.

1. Teachers will review the student handbook thoroughly with all students upon the first week of entrance.
2. Because pupils, like adults, are first impression prone, prepare for sessions and first weeks with special care. Become very familiar with your pupils by learning their names and reviewing their school records and test data by reviewing your pupil's Cumulative Records, available to you in the principal's office.
3. Be business-like from the first second of the first session. Since youngsters try to take advantage of over-friendly, easy going-adults, keep your place without being unnatural. Seriousness can be friendly.
4. Check the physical conditions of the room (ventilation, lighting, cleanliness, seating, bulletin boards, and decorations).
5. Get attention from the students before attempting instruction.
6. From the first day, establish and enforce routines. Lack of routines or disturbances of routines can breed trouble. Each teacher will establish a classroom management plan that is:
  - Appropriate to the age/grade of the students;
  - Serves to maximize the learning time for all students;
  - Is overtly taught until all students demonstrate master; and,
  - Includes a system of consequences that is clearly communicated to students and parents.
7. Don't give students time to get disorderly; assign tasks immediately. When a student misbehaves, the teacher should attempt to redirect the student using verbal or non-verbal cues. If attempts to redirect are unsuccessful (the misbehavior continues), consequences will be applied. A student is not permitted to disrupt teaching or learning.

Some examples of appropriate consequences for misbehavior in the classroom are a conference with the student, re-teaching or clarifying expectations, change of seating arrangement, time out, removal of a privilege, time out in another teacher's classroom, isolation, an individual behavior plan, detention before or after school with parent permission or parent contact.

8. Allow only one pupil at a time to leave the room (on basis of urgent need only).
9. During the term, break up cliques by changing seats when necessary.
10. Allow only one student to approach your desk at a time. Crowds prevent you from viewing the entire class at all times.
11. Be aware that prevention is better than punishment, so move about the room to make your presence felt everywhere, not just front and center.
12. Schedule frequent tests, quizzes, and notebook checks to show pupils their progress.
13. If you feel corporal punishment is in order, send the student to the superintendent's designee with recommendations.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

I. Discipline. The goal is to keep a student in class so that he/she can learn. Positive consequences can help accomplish that goal. Children learn by example, so teach responsibility vs obedience. Above all, treat all students with respect.

Ineffective methods of discipline:

1. Scolding
2. Lecturing
3. Public Humiliation
4. Embarrassment
5. Sarcasm

Causes of misbehavior:

1. Boredom
2. Low self-esteem
3. Powerlessness
4. Unclear limits
5. Need for emotional outlet

II. Classroom management plan must be established by the teacher.

- Be prepared and organized. Prevention is worth the time and effort.
- Be specific. Let students know what your expectations are.
- Be positive. Consequences, like tools, medicine or game plans in sports activities work best when their selection is based on how well they will solve specific problems.
- Different students and different circumstances require different solutions.

Some suggestions for when rules are broken:

1. Reminder
2. Teacher Conference
3. Practice
4. Help
5. Time out
6. Removal
7. A natural consequence

Appropriate disciplinary actions for classroom teachers:

1. Warning
2. Time out in class
3. Change student's seat
4. Conference with student
5. Removal of recess
6. Send note to parents
7. Conference with parent
8. Behavioral contract
9. Detention after school
10. Referral to counselor
11. Referral to principal

Possible reasons for Administrative Intervention Appropriate

1. Class disruption
2. Dress code
3. Insubordination
4. Cheating
5. Unacceptable bus conduct
6. Possession of weapon
7. Profanity
8. Fighting/assault
9. Destruction of property and vandalism
10. Failure to follow rules
11. Argumentative/disrespectful
12. Taking another person's belongings
13. Refusal to do work
14. Restroom misconduct

We invite you to send child for positive reinforcement to the office.

Students who are sent to the office for disciplinary action must bring an office referral. The teacher MUST specify the problem and the teacher's prior efforts to correct the problem. Do not send a student to the office unless you have first contacted parents about behavior problems.

**Office Visits.** A student should only be sent to the office when one of the following conditions apply:

1. Serious or immediate danger of harming self, property or others.
2. Serious or persistent misbehavior that disrupts instruction in the classroom. Teacher must have necessary documentation outlining previous disciplinary actions enforced and parent contacts made before sending the student to the office.

3. Crisis. A student who is severely disruptive, out of control, or presents a danger to him/herself or others will be immediately referred to the office. The teacher should call the office to send help immediately or send a responsible student(s) to get an administrator, if you are not near an intercom.

Persistent or severe misbehavior: If attempts to correct misbehavior are not successful, a student should be sent to the office. When a student is referred to the office, a referral form (available in the office) must be sent indicating the nature of the problem (reason for removal) and what actions have already been taken to attempt to correct the problem. The administrator who sees the student will assess consequences and contact the parents.

## **Student Attendance**

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

## **Attendance Report Procedures**

**Daily Attendance.** All teachers will take attendance (including tardies) via txGradebook every class period. Daily class attendance rosters must be delivered to the office by 9:30 a.m. No eraser marks or liquid paper will be used to make corrections on the attendance roster. If you make a mistake simply put a straight line in black ink and initial. Please use black ink only. An "E" will be used for entering a student onto the attendance report and a "W" is used for withdrawing a student from the attendance report. Any child arriving after 8:00 a.m. must come by the office to pick up a "Tardy Slip". If a child arrives after 9:30, after the attendance roster has been submitted, the office will take care of any corrections needed. Tardies and early releases will not affect official attendance records.

## **MAKE-UP WORK**

Any student who has an excused absence will be allowed to make up work missed. The student should make the work within a reasonable length of time. As an approximation, if a student was absent two days, he/she would have two days to make up the work missed. Students absent on approval of the office (school business) must make up their work and hand it in before they are absent. Teachers are discouraged from making exceptions to this policy.

## PROMOTING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Research shows that attendance is an important factor in achievement. Therefore, our goal is to have at 100% attendance as much as possible. Please recognize students who have perfect attendance every week. As their teacher, you are expected to use classroom incentives to encourage daily attendance. Each semester, students with perfect attendance will be recognized. Parents of absent students will be called after attendance rosters are submitted to office on the day the student is absent.

The law requires students to attend school 90% of the school year’s instructional days. Any student exceeding the number of absences allowed will not be promoted.

Parents of the students not promoted because of excessive absences may arrange a conference with the local district’s attendance committee.

If a student is not in his/her place when the tardy bell sounds, the student is tardy. If tardiness persists, the student should be referred to the superintendent’s designee.

If a student has been absent or has missed any class period, the student is to present an excuse to the homeroom teacher. All excuses must be kept on file. If a student fails to bring an excuse, the student must see the superintendent’s designee.

If a group of students is to be absent to represent the school in some school-sponsored activity, the faculty will be notified of this absence. If the event is school-sponsored, teachers are not to count students absent on attendance sheet or in txGradebook. Permission slips for school-sponsored activities are required.

## GRADING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

Each teacher is responsible for recording their grades in txGradebook. The recorded grades should have appropriate references to skills and dates.

### Six Week Grade Percentages (Grades 1-12)

<b>Tests/Special Projects (Minimum-4).....</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Daily/Classwork/Homework (Minimum-8).....</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Six Weeks Test (1).....</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Total Six Weeks Grade.....</b>	<b>100%</b>

Tutorials will be provided for any student who earns an average of C (70-73) or below in grades 1-12. The student’s teacher is responsible for conducting and documenting the tutorials. This documentation will be turned in at the end of the year with your grade book and lesson plan book. If a student is failing Language Arts in grades 1-5, to determine the “Language Arts” grade for purpose of retention, we use the following formula: Reading 40%, Spelling 25%, and English 35%.

Each grade level will collaboratively plan late work and make up work policies.

Each grade level will collaboratively distribute a copy of grading procedures and expectations to parents.

## **GRADING POLICIES/REPORT CARDS**

Progress reports are issued three weeks into the 6-week grading period. Report cards are issued each six weeks. Semester exams are administered twice a year to all students at the end of each semester. Six weeks tests are not required at the end of each semester, but are required during all other six weeks periods.

Grade sheets and report cards will be due 2 days prior to issuing progress report and report cards. Grade reports will be sent home, if prudent, on the Wednesday following the end of the period being reported. Each teacher gives students his reports during the regular class. Each student is to take it home, have his/her parents review and sign them, and return them within a few days to the teacher issuing them. If a student loses it or fails to return it before the date of the next report, the student will not be issued the new report until a conference is held. The grade report is a formal report sent to the parents by the teachers. It should be filled out in full. Teachers should keep a copy until the signed copy is returned. A parent conference will be arranged to discuss any student unable to work on grade level.

1. Late entries must make up some work.
2. The grades of all transfer students are accepted.
3. Students are to be evaluated on work done in class and/or homework.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

### **Statutory Citation**

Texas Education Code, 21,721. Grade requirement for Advancement of Course Credit.

- (a) A district may not grant social promotions. Students may be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement.
- (b) A student who has not maintained a grade average for a school year equivalent to at least 70 on a scale of 100 may not be advanced from one grade level to the next.
- (c) A student who has not maintained a grade average for a course equivalent to at least 70 on a scale of 100 may not be given credit for the course.
- (d) The State Board of Educations shall adopt rules prescribing alternatives to social promotion for students who are consistently unable to be promoted because of poor academic achievement, and a district may provide for those students in accordance with the board rules, provided that the parent, guardian, or person having lawful control of the student participates in deliberation.

Texas Administrative Code, 75.191. Grading and Reporting Requirements.

- (b) School Districts shall determine student academic achievement using a numerical score on a scale of 0 – 100. For grades one-six, numerical scores shall be established for the subjects of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Grades for health, fine arts, and physical education may be determined by local district policy using numerical grades, letter grades, or indications of “excellent”, “satisfactory”, or “needs improvement”, or any combination thereof. A board of trustees may, at its option, use

grading designations of “excellent”, “satisfactory”, “improvement needed”, and “unsatisfactory” or any combination thereof for reporting purposes for students in grade one for all the such grade or any portion thereof. For grades seven – twelve, numerical scores shall be used for courses listed in 19 TAC Chapter 75, Subchapter C and D of this title (relating to Curriculum).

- (c) School districts shall develop procedures for determining students’ progress and reporting to parents for students at the kindergarten level. The provisions of subsection (a) of this section are not applicable to kindergarten.
- (d) Grades in all subjects or courses shall develop procedures for determining students at the end of each six-week period. The report shall include the number of times the student has been absent. For students in alternative programs, the report to parents must clearly specify the instructional level at which the student is functioning.
- (e) School districts may report grades to parents as numerical scores or may convert to letter grades. If districts choose to report letter grades, the following conversion table shall be used beginning no later than September 1, 1985:
  - (1) 90 – 100 = A
  - (2) 80 – 89 = B
  - (3) 70– 79 = C
  - (4) 60-69 = D
  - (5) 60 – Below = F

**Note: A grade below 50 will not be recorded on the report card during six weeks periods.**
- (f) For districts that choose to report letter grades to parents, the total numerical scores shall be used in determining promotion, course credit, and maintenance of a grade of 70 for participation in extracurricular and other activities. Numerical scores shall be maintained in the permanent records for grades first-eighth and used on the academic achievement records (transcripts) for grades nine – twelve.
- (g) School districts that elect to report letter grades to parents may use + and – with such grades. Districts may also develop procedures for assigning and using grade points at their discretion.
- (h) At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, the school district shall provide notices of progress to the parent or guardian of a student whose grade average in any class is lower than 70 or whose grade average is deemed borderline by the district.
- (i) In assisting students who are limited English proficient for mastery of the Texas essential Knowledge and Skills, districts shall make every effort to allow students to demonstrate knowledge or competency independent of their English skills. These efforts shall include, but not be limited to assessment in the primary language, assessment utilizing methodologies, and non-verbal assessment with multiple instruments.

## Promotion and Course Credit

(a) Elementary grades: To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student shall attain for the year an overall average of 70 or above which is derived by averaging the final numerical grade for language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. In addition, a student shall attain an average of 70 or above in 3 of the following subjects: language arts, mathematics, social studies and science.

(b) Middle school or junior high school: To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student shall attain for the year an overall average of 70 or above for the year in all courses taken. In addition, students shall attain an average of 70 or above in three of the following subjects: language arts (including re-improvement if it is required to be taken), mathematics, social studies, and science.

## PROGRESS NOTICES

Each student who is failing or close to failing will receive a notice and take home at the end of the third week of each six-weeks period. Parent conferences will be arranged when a student continuously fails to show progress.

## HONOR ROLL POLICY

### “A” Honor Roll

#### *Elementary Grades (1 – 5)*

All A's in the total Language Arts\* average, Math, Science, and Social Studies.  
Students may make B's in P.E., Health, Fine Arts, etc.

#### *Jr. High/High School (6 – 12)*

All A's in English, Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies.  
Students may make B's in Band, P.E., Health, Spanish, Fine Arts, etc.

### “AB” Honor Roll

#### *Elementary Grades (1 – 5)*

At least two A's and the rest B's in the total Language Arts\* average, Math, Science, and Social Studies.  
Students may make B's in P.E., Health, Fine Arts, etc.

#### *Jr. High/High School (6 – 12)*

At least two A's and the rest B's in English, Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies.  
Students may make B's in Band, P.E., Health, Spanish, Fine Arts, etc.

\*The Elementary Language Arts grade consists of the averages of the following subject areas Language, Reading, and Spelling. These areas must average to a grade of “A” or “B” to meet the qualifications as indicated above.

A grade of “C” or lower in any area disqualifies a student from “A” or “AB” Honor Roll.



## **Honor Roll Banquet**

Lasara Elementary/Secondary students meeting the following criteria will be eligible to attend the Honor Roll Banquet in May:

Obtain “A” Honor Roll or “A/B” Honor according to Lasara Elementary Honor Roll Policy 4 out of 5 six weeks during the academic school year. The last six weeks will not be considered for eligibility to attend the Honor Roll Banquet in May.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is defined by §TEC 37.0832. All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying, including cyber bullying, to the principal's office. The district’s policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and is reprinted below:

*Please see: [https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=FFI\(LOCAL\).pdf](https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1235?filename=FFI(LOCAL).pdf)*

## **Hazing**

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.