

Liberty Hill ISD
2018–2019 Employee Handbook

Turning Dreams into Reality



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If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of a disability, please e-mail bmabry@libertyhill.txed.net

Employee Handbook Receipt

Name _____

Campus/Department _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Liberty Hill 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.

An electronic copy may be accessed atww

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.

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

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

I understand that I have an obligation to inform my supervisor 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 Director of Human Resources if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

Signature

Date

Please sign and date this receipt and forward it to the HR department.

Introduction

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

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

The handbook and the Board Policy Manual can be found under “staff” on the district website, www.libertyhill.txed.net/staff . The Board Policy Manual can be accessed from that site or directly at <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/1244>

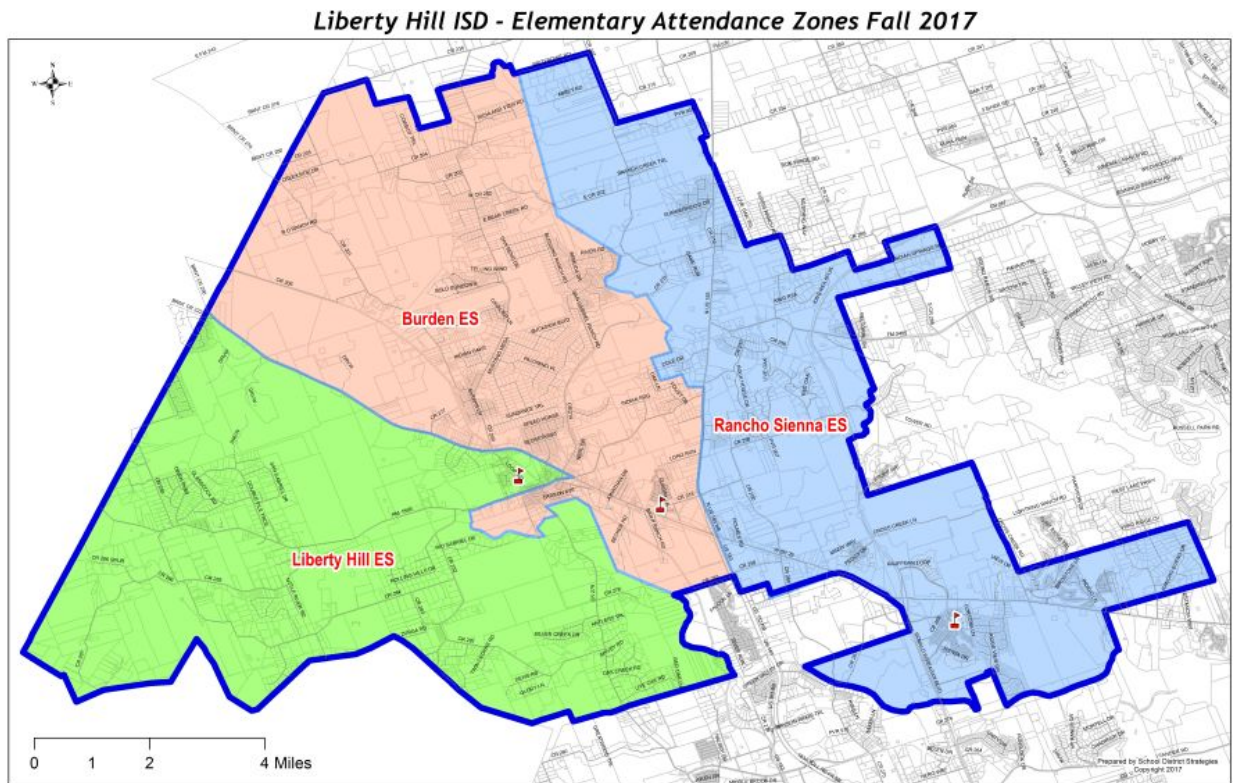
Copies of the handbook are available in campus offices, libraries, the transportation office, and the maintenance barn.

District Information

Description of the District

Liberty Hill is a rural community in the beautiful Texas Hill Country, 30 miles northwest of Austin. The 100 square miles of the school district is located entirely within western Williamson County, one of the fastest growing counties in the state as well as the nation. Administration, faculty, and staff are committed to excellence in all programs to improve student outcomes and enhance the school experience for all students.

District Map



Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

Mission

Our mission is to provide a safe, respectful and responsible environment where all students learn to make their dreams a reality.

Motto

Turning dreams into reality.

Vision

Our vision is to be THE school district in Texas where students are empowered to become knowledgeable, contributing citizens in a changing world.

Goals

- We will provide diverse academic and extracurricular programs that meet the needs of all students, allowing students to explore their talents while developing collaborative and creative problem-solving skills

- We will foster strong relationships among school personnel, parents, community members and students who pledge to invest in, contribute to and support one another
- We will maintain a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that inspires best efforts and a passion for lifelong learning
- We will incorporate technology into the learning environment, promoting a culture that embraces both current trends and future advancements

Board of Trustees

Policies BA, BB series, BD series, and BE series

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

The board of trustees is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the district's children. Board members are elected by place and serve three year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

Board members:

- **Place I**
- Clint Stephenson, Member
- **Place II**
- Clay Cole, President
- **Place III**
- David Nix, Vice President
- **Place IV**
- Kathy Major, Member
- **Place V**
- Anthony Buck, Member
- **Place VI**
- Vickie Peterson, Member
- **Place VII**
- Scott Lindquist, Secretary

The board usually meets the third Monday of each month at 6:00 pm at the Administration Building or on one of the campuses. In the event that large attendance is anticipated, the board may meet at one of the campuses. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and at the district administrative 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 for 2018-2019

August 20	February 18
September 17	March 18
October 15	April 15
November 12	May 20
December 17	June 17
January 21	July 15

Administration

Administrative Office (512) 260-5580, fax: (512) 260-5584

Rob Hart - Superintendent

Donna Cox – Admin Assistant to the Superintendent

Chad Pirtle - Assistant Superintendent

Toni Hicks – Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction

Summer Neary – Special Programs Director

Heather Bortz – Curriculum Coordinator

Michelle Petterson - Curriculum Administrative Assistant

Debbie Mitchell - Receptionist

Candy Tijerina - ESL, Migrant, and Testing Coordinator

Jay Olivier – Chief Information Officer

Matilda Geletei – Admin. Asst. to the Chief Information Officer

Paul Urban - Technology Director

Cindy Del Castillo – PEIMS Coordinator

Vicky Hernandez – PEIMS Assistant

Business Office (512) 260-5570, fax: (512) 260-5587

Jennifer Hanna - Chief Financial Officer

Tara Rockafellow – Finance Coordinator

Julie Koepf – Payroll Coordinator

Erin Jarrett – Accounts Payable Clerk

Martha Vance – Purchasing Coordinator

Amber Dougless – Data Specialist

Human Resources (512) 260-5586, fax: (512) 260-5587

Bobby Mabry – Human Resource Director

Meredith Kimbrough – Human Resource Assistant & Benefits

Special Education (512) 260-5590, fax: (512) 260-5591

Elyse Tarlton - Special Education Director

Karla Martinez - Special Education Administrative Assistant

Tawanna Harris - Case Manager Clerk

School Calendar:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B89HCJ0F7-mHZnQydHVwVDZjcXM/view>

Helpful Contacts

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

School Directory

Elementary School (512) 515-6514, fax: (512) 778-5942

Heather Collison - Principal

Shellie Brewer - Assistant Principal

Claudia Sandoval – Administrative Assistant

Bill Burden Elem. (512) 260-4400, fax: (512) 260-4410

Terrie Chambers - Principal

Elizabeth DeFrancis – Assistant Principal

Joni Dixon – Administrative Assistant

Rancho Sienna Elementary (512) 620 - 4450

Melanie Bowman – Principal

Tanya Hodges – Assistant Principal

Susan Hussey – Administrative Assistant

Intermediate School (512) 379-3200, fax: (512) 379-3210

Josh Curtis - Principal

Dawn Hudson - Assistant Principal

Paula Kaderka - Administrative Assistant

Junior High School (512) 379-3300, fax: (512) 379-3310

Annette Coe - Principal

Bobby Rush - Assistant Principal

Heather Wright – Assistant Principal

Lisa Garner - Administrative Assistant

High School (512) 260-5500, fax: (512) 260-5510

Jon Bever – Interim Principal

Monica Miller - Assistant Principal

Justin Walker - Assistant Principal

Samantha Roos - Administrative Assistant

Transportation (512) 379-3250, fax: (512) 515-7731

Meleia Cox - Transportation Director

Open - Assistant

Evelyn McCloud - Route Specialist

Maintenance (512) 515-5241, fax: (512) 778-5782

Joe Warren – Director

Armina Cornelious – Area Custodial Supervisor

Open - Administrative Assistant

Athletics (512) 260-5505, fax: (512) 260-5513

Jeff Walker - Athletic Director

Melissa Harrington - Head Athletic Trainer

Gina Ketcham - Administrative Assistant

Food Service Director (512) 260-5593

Mary Sheffield - Sodexo Child Nutrition Director

Andrew Giles – Sodexo Chef

Donna Burson - Food Service Administrative Assistant

Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity

Policies DAA, DIA

Liberty Hill 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 on any of the bases listed above should contact Superintendent Rob Hart, Title IX and ADA/Section 504 Coordinator.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Policy DC

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are distributed on a regular basis and posted at the central administration building, at each campus, and on the District's website. Current employees will be given a reasonable opportunity to apply.

Employment after Retirement

Policy DC

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

Contract and Noncontract Employment

Policy DC series

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

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

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

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

Noncertified Professional and Administrative Employees. Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as non-instructional administrators) are employed by a one-year contract that is not subject to the provisions for nonrenewal or termination under the Texas Education Code.

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

Certification and Licenses

Policies DBA, DF

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

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

Recertification of Employment Authorization

Policy DC

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

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

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

Policy CQ, DHE

Non-investigatory searches in the workplace including accessing an employee's desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable. Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no

legitimate expectation of privacy in those places. In addition, the district reserves the right to conduct searches when there is reasonable cause to believe a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct. Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The district may search the employee, the employee's personal items, and work areas including district-owned technology resources, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work sites or used in district business.

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 Human Resources.

Health Safety Training

Policies DBA, DMA

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, University Interscholastic League, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to the campus nurse or trainer prior to the first day of instruction each school year. The campus principal will verify that certificates are current and will forward a list of certified employees to Human Resources and the department of Special Education. Copies of cards should be kept on campus and also sent to Human Resources for the personnel files.

TEA requires that head coaches, head band directors, and chief sponsors of an extracurricular athletic activity (including cheerleading) that is sponsored or sanctioned by the district or UIL must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In Addition, LHISD requires PPCD and Life Skills teachers and aides to be trained. Other sponsors who take students to meetings or contests are encouraged to keep current CPR training.

Reassignments and Transfers

Policy DK

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

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. A teacher requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit his or her request by May 23rd. 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

Policies DEAB, DK, DL

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

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

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

Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk

Policies DEAB, DG

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

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

Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications

Policies DK, DBA

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

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call Human Resources at 512 260 5585.

Outside Employment and Tutoring

Policy DBD

Employees are required to disclose in writing to their immediate supervisor any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of the district. Supervisors will consider outside

employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

Performance Evaluation

Policy DN series

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

Employee Involvement

Policies BQA, BQB

At both the campus and district levels, Liberty Hill 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 Central Office.

Fundraising activities

The principal of each school will be directly responsible for the approval of all fund raising activities in his/her school. **Before any merchandise is ordered, or any project to raise funds is initiated, the principal of the school must first approve it.** To avoid duplication of projects and to keep the number of fundraisers that are going on simultaneously to a minimum, the sponsor must complete the form for fundraiser approval and give it to the principal prior to committing to any fundraiser. Efforts will be made to curtail fund raising drives in order to be as little nuisance to the general public as possible. Sponsors should assign areas for students to work so that several students will not visit the same home. All fundraisers must follow the guidelines provided in the [Activity Fund Handbook](#).

Major projects are defined as those whose sales target is the community. **Deadline for turning in plans to the campus principal for all major fund raising projects for the school year is September 28.** These requests should be forwarded to the business office. Requests for other fund raising projects are due to the principal a minimum of two weeks in advance of the project.

All fundraisers for all groups must have prior approval. Use the forms in the [Activity Fund Handbook](#) available in the principal's office.

Staff Development

Policy DMA

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

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

GT and ESL training requirements

To meet the goal of success for all students, LHISD teachers that teach Gifted and Talented, Pre AP and AP courses are required to attend a 30-hour GT Institute. Language Arts teachers must obtain an ESL certification by attending an ESL Academy **and** passing the ESL TExES certification exam. New hires must complete the requirements within two years of being hired by the district. Completion is a requirement for continued employment.

Opportunities for both GT and ESL training will be provided locally. LHISD will reimburse the test registration fee when a staff member has added the ESL certification to his/her certificate. A copy of the certificate must be sent to Human Resources before payment will be made.

After attending the initial 30-hour GT Institute, teachers are required to attend a six-hour yearly GT update.

Technology requirements for educators

The State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) has approved educator certification standards in Technology Applications for all educators. The standards address what all teachers should know and be able to do as applied to the Student Technology Applications Standards.

The Texas Education Agency recommends that all educators strive to meet these SBEC standards. All educators are expected to create a personal learning plan, attend training, and demonstrate proficiency in all the technology standards within two years of hire date.

All other staff members (except Auxiliary Personnel) are expected to create a personal learning plan, attend training, and demonstrate proficiency in the technology standards that are applicable to their job responsibilities.

The Instructional Technology Department will work closely with the Curriculum Department to meet technology training needs of all employees.

Special education requirements

All special education teachers and aides must be trained in TBSI and CPI. Life Skills teachers and aides and those working in the Solid Roots program must also be CPR certified and must attend the required updates. Teachers and aides in Life Skills and behavior programs are required to complete a yearly CPI update. Other staff members must complete an update every two years.

Staff development certificates

All staff members need to keep **original** staff development certificates. Staff members need to access their transcript of training in Eduphoria Workshop to review it. All in-district staff development will appear on the transcript. Out of district certificates should be entered into Eduphoria by the staff member into Eduphoria Workshop. Certificates can be scanned and downloaded into Workshop. Certificates should not be submitted to central office.

To receive a certificate for ESC 13 trainings, teachers must complete an online evaluation. Use **lh** and the last four digits of your Social Security Number as your password. **Do not change the password. If you have changed it, please change it back.** The password is used to register you and pay for training. If you need help with the ESC 13 system, contact the principal's administrative assistant for your campus.

Staff development for certificate renewal

Each individual who holds a Standard Certificate is responsible for renewing the certificate. To be eligible for renewal, the classroom teacher must satisfy Continuing Professional Education (CPE) requirements. The renewal date of a Standard Certificate will be five years after the last day of the certificate holder's birth month. If a classroom teacher holds multiple certificates, all can be renewed concurrently and all are subject to renewal during the certificate holder's birth month five years after the earliest certificate was issued. Classroom teachers are required to complete at least 150 clock hours of CPE, and principals must complete 200 clock hours during each five-year renewal period. **LHISD requires teachers and principals to complete a minimum of 50 clock hours of CPE each year.** One semester hour of credit earned at an accredited institution of higher education is equivalent to 15 CPE clock hours. Only those professional education activities from approved registered providers will be accepted for renewal purposes. For a list of approved providers, please see:

www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/certinfo/regprov.asp. LHISD is a registered provider.

Certificates can be renewed up to 6 months prior to the expiration date.

It is very important for SBEC to have current contact information for all certified staff. Information can be updated on the TEA website under the Teachers tab.

Staff development for non-instructional personnel

Staff development for non-instructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g., bus drivers, cafeteria staff) and/or continued employee skill development.

Compensation and Benefits

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB

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

All employees have access to their assignment, pay, and work schedules through Skyward Employee Access. 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 Human Resources or Payroll for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay. Salary information is confidential and should not be discussed with other employees.

Annualized Compensation

The district pays employees over 12 months regardless of the number of months employed during the school year. Salaried employees will be paid in equal monthly payments, beginning with the first pay period of the school year. An employee who separates from the district before the last day of instruction or retires under TRS, will receive in his or her final paycheck, a lump sum payment for wages actually earned from the beginning of the school year to the date

of separation. Employees who separate after the last day of instruction will continue to receive paychecks through the end of the summer.

Booster Club Payments to Employee

Booster organizations may not contribute funds in an effort to increase the personnel allocations and/or stipends for any program or campus. A booster organization will not give cash to any school employee to use at her or his discretion.

Paychecks

All employees will be paid by direct deposit. Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into an account at any financial institution of their choosing. With automatic deposit, an employee's pay is immediately available on or before the 28th of each month except December when paychecks may be deposited earlier. Payroll statements containing detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of leave accumulated are available online through Skyward Employee Access. Contact Julie Koepl in the payroll office for more information about the automatic payroll deposit or other payroll questions.

<u>Pay Period</u>	<u>Timesheet Due</u>	<u>Pay Date</u>
8/5/2018 – 9/1/2018	9/7/2018	9/28/2018
9/2/2018 – 10/6/2018	10/12/2018	10/27/2018
10/7/2018 – 11/5/2018	11/9/2018	11/28/2018
11/4/2018 – 12/1/2018	12/7/2018	12/20/2018
12/2/2018 – 1/5/2019	1/11/2019	1/28/2019
1/6/2019 - 2/2/2019	2/8/2019	2/28/2019
2/3/2019 – 3/2/2019	3/8/2019	3/28/2019
3/3/2019 – 4/12/2019	4/10/2019	4/26/2019
4/7/2019 – 5/4/2019	5/10/2019	5/28/2019
5/5/2019 – 6/8/2019	6/14/2019	6/28/2019
6/9/2019 – 7/6/2019	7/12/2019	7/26/2019
7/7/2019 – 8/3/2019	8/9/2019	8/28/2019

Payroll Deductions

Policy CFEA

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

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

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

Temporary and part-time employees who are not eligible for TRS membership must have retirement contributions deducted and deposited in a PST (Part time, Seasonal, or Temporary) account.

Overtime Compensation

Policy DEAB

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 am on Sunday and ends at 11:59 pm on Saturday.

Nonexempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor. An employee who

works overtime without prior approval may be subject to disciplinary action but will be compensated in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

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

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

- Employees can accumulate up to 20 hours of comp time.
- Comp time must be used in the duty year that it is earned.
- Use of comp time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval, as workload permits, or at the supervisor's direction.
- An employee may be required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

“Occasional” or “sporadic” work on a part-time, volunteer basis is allowed for hourly employees in a capacity different from their regular duties, for example keeping the clock or taking tickets at a basketball game.

Teacher Stipends: UIL/Department-Team Leaders/Coordinators

Department head and team leaders, at the principals discretion, may receive a stipend. UIL sponsors will also receive a stipend. Fall meet stipends will be included in the December paycheck. All other stipends under \$100 will be paid in June.

Any stipend over \$1000 will be included as part of the salary.

District Apparel

Any district clothing or apparel given to employees must be returned upon separation of employment from the district.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

Policy DEE

Before travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor 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 and will be reimbursed for meals and other expenses with original receipts.

- Per local guidelines, the maximum lodging rate is \$100 plus city/local taxes per night, per employee. This amount may be increased up to the amount published in the current GSA with supervisor approval. To locate the current GSA please go to www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120. If the location is not published in the GSA, the \$100 limit will be used. The employee is responsible for any cost greater than \$100 or the GSA rate. A GSA rate over \$150 requires CFO approval. All room reservations will be made through the appropriate person and a check will be issued to the hotel. On-line reservation rate quotes will suffice for advance checks to hotels- priced without State Tax. Actual receipts must be turned in immediately following your stay.
- Meal reimbursements up to \$46/per day—traveler must include original receipts. There will be no advances made prior to travel. The District prohibits reimbursements of taxes, tips or alcohol so these costs are the responsibility of the employee.
- Traveler must provide agenda—meals not reimbursed if provided at event
- Mileage reimbursed at \$0.50/mile—traveler must include MapQuest of trip and toll calculator. The district will reimburse for only one vehicle per training so staff members are encouraged to carpool.
- Parking and other expenses reimbursed with original receipts

Note: Meals and lodgings for workshops within the Region XIII service area will not be reimbursed. Employees are encouraged to attend staff development within the Region XIII service area or within a day's drive.

Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

Policy CRD

Group health insurance coverage is provided through TRS-ActiveCare, the statewide public school employee health insurance program. The district's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the Board of Trustees. For employees who work at least **20** hours per week, LHISD will contribute \$300 per month for health insurance coverage.

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-Active Care.

The insurance plan year runs from September 1 through August 31. New employees must complete enrollment forms within the first 31 days of employment. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each year. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact Julie Koepl or Meredith Kimbrough at the administration building.

Scott & White HMO is offered as an alternative to TRS-ActiveCare AETNA plans.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees can enroll in supplemental insurance programs for legal, disability, vision, dental, life, and dread diseases. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Human Resource 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

Policy CRE

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. 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.

An employee eligible for workers' compensation income benefits, and not on assault leave, may elect in writing to use paid leave.

All work-related accidents or injuries **must be reported immediately** to your supervisor. A written accident report must be submitted to Julie Koepl in the Business Office. Employees who

are unable to work due to a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. (See Worker's Compensation Benefits.) LHISD has workers' compensation coverage with Claims Administrative Services. Employees with questions about workers' compensation benefits should contact the Human Resource office.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance

Policy CRF

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

Teacher Retirement

Policy DEG

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify their supervisor, the superintendent's office, and 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).

Retirement, unused Leave

Policy DEC(Local)

Full time employees who were hired **before August 1, 2009** and who retire from the district after three years continuous service are eligible for supplementary payment of \$50.00 per day for unused state and local leave. To be eligible for the reimbursement, the employee must plan to retire at the end of the contract year or at the end of the school year if the employee has no contract and must have filed the appropriate forms for retirement with the TRS. The employee must meet the eligibility requirements of TRS within two months of the last day of service with the district.

Employees who begin work **after August 1, 2009**, are not eligible for the reimbursement.

Free athletic passes

Employees who present their LHISD identification badge will be admitted free to all local athletic contests.

Tax sheltered annuities

Payroll deductions for tax sheltered annuities are available.

Professional dues

Liberty Hill I.S.D. provides payroll deduction for professional dues.

Leaves and Absences

Policies DEC, DECA, DECB

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

Employees must follow district and campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate leave request form. Leave may be taken in whole workday or half workday increments.

Paid leave must be used in whole workday or half workday 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:

1. Local Leave
2. State Sick leave accumulated before 1995-1996 school year
3. State personal leave

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

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, step sibling, 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 six 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.

State 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: non discretionary and discretionary.

Local personal leave

All employees shall earn up to an additional 5 days of local personal leave per school year, concurrently with state leave. This leave is earned at the rate of ½ day for every 18 days worked. Beginning with the 1998-99 school year, unused local leave is cumulative.

Nondiscretionary. Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered non discretionary leave. Reasons for this type of leave 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 three days in advance of the anticipated absence. Discretionary personal leave will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis and will be subject to the following limitations:

- Discretionary leave may not last more than **three consecutive workdays**, except with special approval from the supervisor for extenuating circumstances. **Professional employees will also need the superintendent's approval.**
- Discretionary leave may not be taken on the following key days: the day before a school holiday; the day after a school holiday; days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams; days scheduled for state-mandated testing; or professional/staff development days. **Exceptions to this rule for professional employees will require the approval of their supervisor and the superintendent.**
- 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.

Since learning best occurs when the regular teacher is in the classroom, please plan trips and vacations around the school calendar.

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.

Substitutes. Employees will be charged leave even if a substitute was not employed.

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 half or full day 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

Availability. Paid leave for the current year shall be available for use at the beginning of the school year. Paid leave shall not be approved for more work days than have been accumulated in prior years plus those to be earned during the current year. Any leave taken for which leave balances are insufficient shall result in a deduction from the employee's paycheck commensurate with the amount of leave used.

When an employee who has used more leave than he or she had accumulated ceases to be employed by the District, the cost of the unearned leave days shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—General Provisions

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

Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:

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

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

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.

Definition of Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for the condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatments.

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

Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions

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

Use of Paid Leave. FML runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, compensatory time, assault leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. When an absent employee is eligible for FMLA leave, the District will designate the absence as FMLA leave. The District will require employees to use temporary disability leave and paid leave, including compensatory time, concurrently with FMLA leave.

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.

Intermittent leave may be taken under the following circumstances:

- An employee is needed to care for a seriously ill spouse, child, or parent
- An employee requires medical treatment for a serious illness
- An employee is seriously ill and unable to work

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 to the procedures outlined in policy (see DECA (LEGAL)).

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

District Contact. Employees that require FML or have questions should contact Julie Koepl 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, human resources should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement

confirming that the employee is able to resume regular duties. 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 pre-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 in a work-related injury should be immediately reported to the Director of Human Resources.

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 not responsible for purposes of criminal liability.

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

Extended sick leave

After all available state and local leave days have been exhausted, a full-time employee can use up to 20 workdays of extended leave for the employee's own catastrophic illness or injury. A

written request for extended sick leave must be accompanied by medical certification of the illness or injury.

For professional employees, the average daily rate of pay for a substitute will be deducted for each day of extended sick leave, whether or not a substitute is employed. For other employees, an amount equal to 30 percent of the individual's daily rate of pay will be deducted.

Jury Duty

The district provides paid leave to employees who are summoned to jury duty. Employees who report to the court for jury duty may keep any compensation the court provides. An employee should report a summons for jury duty to his or her supervisor as soon as it is received and may be required to provide the district a copy of the summons to document the need for leave.

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

Other court appearances

Employees will be paid while on leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding and will not be required to use paid leave. Absences for court appearances related to an employee's personal business must be taken as personal leave or leave without pay (if no personal leave is available). Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

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.

Reimbursement of leave upon retirement

The district is phasing out the reimbursement of leave upon retirement. Employees who begin working for the district after August 1, 2009 will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Employees who began working for the district **prior to August 1, 2009** and who retire under TRS after at least three years of continuous service are eligible for a supplementary payment of \$50.00 per day for unused state and local leave. To be eligible for the reimbursement, the employee must plan to retire at the end of the contract year or at the end of the school year if the employee has no contract and must have filed the appropriate forms for retirement with the TRS.

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 Human Resources. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years.

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

Employee Relations and Communications

Employee Recognition and Appreciation

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities also include recognition of staff members at the campus level. Principals are asked to inform central office of staff accomplishments, awards, and major life events.

District Communications

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

Liberty Hill ISD e-News is a weekly newsletter with campus and district information distributed to parents and employees that is published by the Assistant Superintendent.

The Liberty Hill ISD E-Newsletter is a monthly publication from Assistant Superintendent containing employee news and district related information that is distributed to employees.

Employees should contact the Administrative Assistant for the Assistant Superintendent at 260 5580 to have events and information included in the newsletters, newspapers, and/or on the district website. Campus Digital Learning Coaches will post campus activities on the website. The Assistant Superintendent' office will post district activities. The website will provide an avenue to inform the community of the many positive things that happen at our schools.

News Releases

News releases of a political or controversial nature, as well as those concerning the overall operation of the district schools, or that involve more than one campus, will be made only by the superintendent. All media request should be approved by the Director of Human Resources.

Complaints and Grievances

Policy DGBA

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

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

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1244?filename=DGBA\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1244?filename=DGBA(LOCAL).pdf)

Employee Conduct and Welfare

Standards of Conduct

Policy DH

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

- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action.
- 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 may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the superintendent knew of the incident. See *Reports to the Texas Education Agency* for additional information.

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

Texas Educators' Code of Ethics

Statement of Purpose

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

Professional 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 knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 1.14 The educator shall not assist another educator, school employee, contractor, or agent in obtaining a new job as an educator or in a school, apart from the routine transmission of administrative and personnel files, if the educator knows or has probable cause to believe that such person engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law.

2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Policies DH, DIA

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

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:

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1244?filename=DIA\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1244?filename=DIA(LOCAL).pdf)

Any allegation of harassment will be promptly investigated and addressed. An employee may appeal the decision of the principal or supervisor regarding the investigation into the allegations in accordance with the employee complaint and grievance policy and procedures. To the greatest extent possible, complaints shall be treated as confidential. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The district will not retaliate against an employee who in good faith reports perceived harassment.

Harassment of Students

Policies DH, DHB, FFG, FFH, FFI

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

Sexual harassment of students includes any welcome or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other oral, written, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature. Romantic relationships between district employees and students are strictly prohibited.

Other prohibited conduct includes the following:

- Engaging in sexually oriented conversations for the purpose of personal sexual gratification
- Telephoning students at home or elsewhere and engaging in inappropriate social relationships
- Engaging in physical contact that would reasonably be construed as sexual in nature
- Enticing or threatening students to get them to engage in sexual behavior in exchange for grades or other school-related benefits

See Board Policy FFH (Local) and DHB (Legal) for examples of prohibited conduct and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students.

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1244?filename=DF\(LEGAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1244?filename=DF(LEGAL).pdf)

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1244?filename=FFH\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1244?filename=FFH(LOCAL).pdf)

Harassment of students by students

Policy FFH (Legal)

Sexual harassment of students is conduct that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it can be said to deprive the victim of access to the educational opportunities or benefits provided by the school. Sexual harassment does not include simple acts of teasing and name-calling among school children even when the comments target differences in gender.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Policies DG, DH, FFG, GRA

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect, as defined by Texas Family Code §26.001, to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, 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.

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 or disabled person.

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to local office or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person or administrator to make the report.

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

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. 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 through training in recognizing, reporting, and dealing with child abuse. 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 to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

As a LHISD 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. Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

A child who has experienced sexual abuse should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware that disclosures of sexual abuse may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse, and it is important to be calm and comforting if the child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

Our school counselors and/or principals will have additional material to share with you and can help you when you feel that "something just isn't right" with a child.

The following Web sites might help you become more aware of child sexual abuse:

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index.aspx?id=2820>

<http://sapr.nonprofitoffice.com/>

<http://www.taasa.org/member/materials2.php>

http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml

http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml

Employees are required to follow the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

Reporting Crime

Policy DG

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

Technology Resources

Policy CQ

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

- Imposes no tangible cost to the district.
- Does not unduly burden the district's 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. Emails are archived and subject to the Open Records Act.

Employees and students who are authorized to use the systems are required to abide by the provisions of the district's acceptable use policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the Director of Technology or the Chief Information Officer.

All LHISD employees will be required to read and sign the Acceptable Use Regulations before being assigned a network account. **See Board Policy CQ (local) & Acceptable Use Regulations.** 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 action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the Chief Information Office.

Staff members are expected to replace/repair technology devices that are removed from district property and then lost, stolen, or damaged.

Personal Use of Electronic Communications

Policy DH

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

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

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

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment.
- The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, meal times, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct district business.
- 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 email addresses. [See Policy GBA]
- Copyright law [See Policy CY]
- Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]

See *Use of Electronic Media with Students*, below, for regulations on employee communication with students through electronic media.

Electronic Communications between Employees and Students

Policy DH

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

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

- The employee has provided the parent with a copy of this protocol
- The employee and the student have a social relationship outside of school;
- The parent understands that the employee's communications with the student are accepted from district regulation; and

- The parent is solely responsible for monitoring electronic communications between the employee and the student.

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

- *Electronic media* includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), wikis, electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram). *Electronic media* also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.
- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee’s personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*: however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.
- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

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

- The employee may use any form of electronic media except text messaging. 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 his or her immediate supervisor as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and supervisor receive the same message.
- 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 p.m. and 6 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics including:
 - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
 - Copyright law [Policy CY]
 - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy 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.
- In determining whether or not electronic communication is appropriate, the district will consider:
 - The nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
 - The subject matter of the communication;
 - Whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication; and
 - The specific nature of the 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.

Criminal History Background Checks

Policy DBAA

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

Employee Arrests and Convictions

Policy DH

An employee must notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor 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

Policies DH,

Liberty Hill 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:

Staff or students who need help with drug or alcohol problems are encouraged to call the Williamson County Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. The Council can be reached 24 hours a day, seven days a week at (512) 869-2571. The Council is located at 707 ½ Main Street, Georgetown. The Council currently offers a variety of services designed to intervene at all stages of recovery, addressing such areas as chemical dependency, trauma, and family-of-origin issues. Programs include the following:

- Profiles in Prevention Program
- Advanced Alcohol and Drug Education
- Mortimer-Filkins Evaluation Program
- Texas DWI Education Program
- Student Assistance Program
- Pathfinder Prevention/Intervention
- Alcohol Education for Minors (MIP Program)
- Profiles in Courage
- Texas DWI Intervention Program (Repeat Offenders)
- Drug Offender Education

Drug-Free Schools Requirements

The District prohibits the unlawful distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs, inhalants, and alcohol on school premises or as part of any of the District’s activities.

Employees who violate this prohibition shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Such sanctions may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation programs or employee assistance

programs, termination from employment with the District, and referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution. [See policies at DH and DHE] 41 U.S.C. 702(a)(1)(A); 28 TAC 169.2

Compliance with these requirements and prohibitions is mandatory and is a condition of employment.

[This notice complies with notice requirements imposed by the federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 (20 U.S.C. 3224a and 34 CFR 86.201)]

Tobacco Products and E-Cigarette Use

Policies DH, FNCD, GKA

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

Fraud and Financial Impropriety

Policy CAA

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

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district

- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district, except as otherwise permitted by law or district policy
- Inappropriately destroying, removing, or using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by federal, state, or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by law or district policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district
- Failure to comply with requirements imposed by law, the awarding agency, or a pass-through entity for state and federal awards

Conflict of Interest

Policy CB, DBD

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

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

An employee with a substantial interest in a business entity or interest in real property must disclose the interest to the district prior to the award of a contract or authorization of payment. This is done by filing an affidavit with the superintendent.

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

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

Gifts and Favors

Policy DBD

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

Any employee that is involved in the technology planning process (tech plans are not required for E-rate but the gift rules do apply to employees that contribute to the tech plan) or in the procurement/competitive bidding process (including determining what items to bid out, designing the RFP, collecting bids, evaluating bids, etc.) are prohibited from receiving any individual gift of \$20, or gifts totaling more than \$50 for a 12 month period from E-rate service providers. The use of demo equipment is also defined as part of the evaluation process.

Copyrighted Materials

Policy CY

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

Associations and Political Activities

Policy DGA

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

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

Use of district resources including work time for political activities is prohibited.

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

coerce an employee to refrain from making a contribution to a charitable organization or in response to a fundraiser or attending a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions.

Safety

Policy CK series

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact their immediate supervisor or Chad Pirtle, Assistant Superintendent.

Possession of Firearms and Weapons

Policies DH, FNCG, GKA

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

Visitors in the Workplace

Policy GKC

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

should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

Asbestos Management Plan

Policy CKA

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

Pest Control Treatment

Policies CLB, DI

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

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located in the campus offices or on the front door/window. 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 electronic means. Please address your request to the Assistant Superintendent. Pest control information sheets are available from maintenance department.

Professional Dress

Harry Wong says, "The effective teacher dresses appropriately as a professional educator to model success."

While we want our staff to be comfortable, we also want employees to be good role models for how a professional dresses and presents himself or herself. Your dress, your actions, and your words are what young people will take to be appropriate.

Exercise discretion, modesty, and good judgment in your attire. Professional casual is allowed. Except for coaches and PE teachers, shorts, skorts, exercise clothing, and warm-ups and are not appropriate. Nice jeans and Panther or staff shirts are allowed on spirit days (Thursdays at the Junior High and Fridays on the other campuses.) Some campuses also may give "jean coupons" to reward exceptional efforts. The certificates allow jeans to be worn on other days. Jeans can

also be worn with college shirts on College Days and for other special events approved by the principal.

General Procedures

Bad Weather Closing

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

When possible, information will be posted on the district website immediately. Staff should check for emails. A message will be sent out through our automated messaging system.

Emergencies

Policies CKC, CKD

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

Purchasing Procedures

Policy CH

All requests for purchases must be submitted to and approved by the LHISD Business Office with the proper paperwork. Credit cards can be checked out from the business office. The card and accompanying receipt must be returned **the next business day**. Under no circumstances can a card be passed on to another staff member.

Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district. Contact your campus principal or the Purchasing Coordinator for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees should notify the campus secretary and Julie Koepl, Payroll Coordinator if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, home telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. Changes should also be made with the State Board of Educator Certification (<https://secure.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/login.asp>).

Personnel Records

Policy DBA, GBA

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

- Address
- Phone number, including personal cell phone number
- Information that reveals whether they have family members
- Emergency contact information
- Personal email address
- Social Security Number

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

Records in personnel files

The Texas Education Agency requires that each teacher have on file in the superintendent's office the following credentials before being eligible to receive pay checks:

- An official college transcript that proves your right to the salary you receive and your right to the position you hold.
- An original Texas teaching certificate with TECAT sticker attached, if applicable, or a completed emergency teaching permit form.
- An original teaching service record that is accurate and up-to-date.

- A college plan for removal of deficiencies or proof of enrollment in an alternative certification program if you are teaching on an emergency permit or temporary certificate.

Human Resources will contact you if your files are incomplete.

Building Use

Policies DGA, GKD

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The maintenance department is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact facilities rentals at 512 515 5241 to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

Field trips and extracurricular trips

Vehicle Request:

In order to have vehicles and drivers available to meet your needs, vehicles must be requested **at least two weeks** before a field trip. Athletic trips require a month's notice. The requisition must include any special transportation needs. **No child will be left at school because of a disability that requires special transportation arrangements.** All bus requisitions must be made using the Transfinder system.

Costs:

School organizations using buses for extracurricular activities and field trips will reimburse the transportation fund at a rate based on the actual cost of operation, calculated in accordance with State Board rules. The estimated cost per mile is listed below:

Car: \$0.60/mile

Van: \$0.60/mile

Bus: \$2.00/mile

Drivers: \$17.50/hr

Professional staff members who serve as sponsors and coaches will not be paid for driving vehicles for extra-curricular trips. Drivers who are asked to drive a bus during their regular work days will not receive additional pay.

Meals:

Sack lunches for out-of-district trips should be ordered from the school cafeteria. Contact the campus cafeteria manager or Mary Sheffield, Child Nutrition Director, at 260-5593 to order meals.

Parent Permission/Emergency Contact Forms:

When students travel outside the District on field trips and other school-sponsored events, sponsors must take Emergency Contact forms with them. Parent permission must be obtained before a student is taken out of district.

Termination of Employment

Resignations

Policy DFE

Contract Employees. Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received at least 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the superintendent. 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 following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in *Reports to Texas Education Agency*. 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 their supervisor at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

Policies DF Series

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be nonrenewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The timelines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given

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

Dismissal of Noncontract Employees

Policy DCD

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

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.

The district may withhold, from the final paycheck, the cost of the items not returned.

Reports to Texas Education Agency

Policy DF, DHB

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).

Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

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

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

Student Issues

Equal Educational Opportunities

Policies FB, FFH

Liberty Hill 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 the superintendent who serves as the Title IX Coordinator and the Section 504 Coordinator.

Student Records

Policy FL

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

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

Teacher's personal notes on a student that are used for personal memory aid are not considered educational records and do not have to be made available to a parent or student.

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

Family rights and privacy act

This act states that students and parents are permitted to inspect and review records and must be given a copy of any part or all of the educational records on request. Further, the records about an individual may not be disclosed to outsiders except by the consent of the individual in

question. The consent must be in writing and must be specific in stating to whom the record may be disclosed, which records may be disclosed, and where applicable, the time frame during which the records may be disclosed.

Directory Information

Policy FL

Directory information for students has been classified into two separate categories:

1. items for use only for school-sponsored purposes; and
2. items for all other purposes

For school-sponsored and school-related purposes the following are considered directory information:

- name
- address
- telephone number
- photograph
- date of birth
- honors and awards received
- dates of attendance
- grade level
- most recent school attended
- participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- weight and height of athletic team members
- enrollment status

For all other purposes, directory information will include

- name
- address
- telephone number

A parent or eligible student may prevent the release of any or all directory information regarding a student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days after receiving the student handbook.

Parent and Student Complaints

Policy FNG

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

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

Administering Medication to Students

Policy FFAC

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

Dietary Supplements

Policies DH, FFAC

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

Steroids

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use. Bodybuilding, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone is dangerous and prohibited by law. Staff members must report any knowledge of steroid use to the principal and/or superintendent.

Psychotropic Drugs

Policy FFAC

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

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

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

Student Conduct and Discipline

Policies in the FN series and FO series

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

Bullying

Policy FFI

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

Bullying occurs when a student - or groups of students - engage in written or verbal expression or physical conduct that:

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

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

All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying to the campus principal.

Refer to Policy FFI (Local) for definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students.

Each year employees should review Board Policy FFI for information regarding bullying. The link is provided below:

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1244?filename=FFI\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/1244?filename=FFI(LOCAL).pdf)

Hazing

Policy FNCC

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

Asthma or Severe Anaphylaxis Medication

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or at a school-related event if certain conditions are met. Consult the student handbook or the campus nurse for specifics.

Diabetes

Each diabetic student and staff member will have an individual health plan for the management of diabetes. The school nurses will train staff members on diabetes in general. Staff members who serve diabetic students will receive specific instructions from the school nurse.

Food Provided to Students

Federal and State Nutritional Guidelines

Cafeteria Services

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program. These programs are also referred to as the School Nutrition Programs (SNP). The purpose of the SNP is to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the nation's children by providing nutritional meals and snacks as well as milk each school day. This ensures that participating children gain a full understanding of the relationship between proper eating and good health as well as participating in learning experiences that will improve their eating habits. Each program has its own criteria for program participation. The district must comply with the nutrition policies outlined by the Texas Department of Agriculture and Federal Standards. (www.squaremeals.org) [For more information, see policy CO(LEGAL).]

Free and Reduced Meal Price Program

Free and reduced price meals are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. Applications are available at the campus offices, Child Nutrition Office at Central Office and can be printed from the Liberty Hill Child Nutrition web page. Online applications can be submitted through Skyward Family Access. Households must submit a new Free/Reduced application each year to qualify. If a household receives a direct certification letter, do not complete an application. Let the Child Nutrition Department know if any children in the household attending Liberty Hill ISD are not listed in the letter.

Smart Snacks or Competitive Foods

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act required the USDA to establish nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold to students outside of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program meals on the school campus during the school day. These science-based nutrition standards promote a healthy school environment and apply to all foods sold in any location where students have access on the school campus. These items include, but are not limited to, food and/or beverages sold in a meal service line, snack bars, in vending machines, or as part of fundraisers. Competitive foods must meet a set of general food nutrition standards and nutrient standards based on calories, saturated or trans fats, sodium, and sugar in order to be sold under the competitive rule. There are also restrictions on packing size and types of beverage that can be offered based on school level. The school day is defined as the period from the midnight before the beginning of the official instructional day to 30 minutes after the end of the official instructional day. The district policy for time and places competitive foods can be sold will be addressed by the Local Wellness Policy.

The Texas Department of Agriculture requires that the Child Nutrition Department maintain documentation or records for all competitive beverages and foods sold. This documentation must demonstrate that food and/or beverage items sold met the Competitive Food Nutrition Standards. **Please contact the Child Nutrition Department prior to purchasing any fundraising items that could fall under these new regulations.**

Exceptions to the Competitive Food Nutrition Standards

Fundraising activities in which food is sold during the day not intended for consumption on the school campus do not have to meet the nutritional requirements. For example: cookie dough or frozen sausage

The Competitive Food Nutrition Standards do not apply to events or activities that occur 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day. They also do not include any area restricted to adults or staff only as long as students are not allowed to have access to the area.

The Competitive Food Nutrition Standards do not apply to special needs students whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) plan indicates the use of a food or beverage item of any type for behavior modification. In addition, the requirements do not apply to school nurses using a food or beverage item of any type during the course of providing health care to individual students.

The Competitive Food Nutrition Standards do not restrict what parents may provide for their own student's meal. However, LHISD strongly encourages parents to provide a healthy lunch and snacks. Parents and students may not provide food or beverages, especially restricted items, to other students.

Birthday Parties (PreK-Grade 6 only)

Foods otherwise restricted are permitted in classroom birthday parties. These competitive foods are not allowed in the cafeteria during any mealtimes at any LHISD campus. Lauren's Law allows a parent or grandparent to bring any food product to children in the classroom. While cupcakes, cookies, and ice cream are allowed, we encourage parents to bring healthy snacks. Treats for birthdays should be served only after the last scheduled lunch is over. A list of healthy snacks and birthday snack ideas are posted on the LHISD Child Nutrition Services website under Smart Snacks. According to Texas Action for Healthy Kids, "It is a parent's right to send cupcakes or other things for a student's birthday, but it is also a parent's right to expect healthy snacks to be served to their children at school." Carefully consider the items you choose to provide.

For more information about Child Nutrition Services, contact: Mary Sheffield, Child Nutrition Services Director at 512-260-5593

Student conduct and discipline

Policies in the FN series and FO series

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Code of Conduct and student handbook. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management strategies that have been adopted by the district. Other employees that have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus principal. Discipline should align with the principles of Solid Roots (Emergent Tree) and Capturing Kids Hearts.

Discipline differs from punishment in that its goal is to help the student learn to manage his/her own behavior and make appropriate choices. Disciplinary action should be carefully selected with this educational goal in mind.

Any disciplinary action against a student must be for the purposes of correcting the misconduct of the individual, of promoting adherence by that student and by the other students to the principle of respect for the rights of others, and of obtaining compliance with the rules and regulations of the School Board, the Superintendent, and/or the school, that are designed to provide an appropriate school environment.

In all instances, discipline of a student must be of a nature appropriate for that student and in line with the seriousness of the offense and its potential effect upon other students as well as the facts and circumstances existing at the time of the offense. In no instance will any type of discipline be imposed which holds a student up to ridicule or scorn. Furthermore, no discipline shall be administered maliciously or for the purpose of revenge.

LHISD policy prohibits the use of corporal punishment.

Due process

A student charged with violating a policy, rule, or regulation will be informed of the specific nature or the infraction [i.e., the specific rule(s) or policy(s) violated] and the specific conduct that allegedly constituted the violation. The student will have an opportunity to confront those charging him and explain his actions.

For minor infractions for which minor penalties are imposed, a brief informal conversation between the student and the teacher or school official will suffice; but for more serious infractions giving rise to more serious penalties, a more formal hearing process is required. In any event, notice and an opportunity to be heard are minimal elements of procedural due

process, and shall always be afforded regardless of the degree of the violation or the severity of the disciplinary action contemplated.

Enrollment and admissions

Any child living within the boundaries of the Liberty Hill Independent School District is entitled to enroll in the public schools of the Liberty Hill Independent School District if he/she is five years of age or older and under 21 years of age at the beginning of the scholastic year (September 1) and has not graduated from high school. A child is not eligible for enrollment in the first grade unless he/she is at least six years of age on September 1, has attended a public school kindergarten, or has been enrolled in the first grade in the public schools in another state prior to transferring to a Texas public school. Children who have attended a private kindergarten will need to consult the elementary principal or counselor for procedures for kindergarten acceleration.

Each child entering the Liberty Hill Independent School District for the first time shall be required to present a birth certificate or other legal proof of birth date.

For the 2018-2019 school year, LHISD will accept out-of-district transfers without requiring a fee.

Student attendance

Policy FEB

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

Written excuse

A student should be present in class unless it is absolutely necessary to be absent. When a student is absent, he will be required to bring a written excuse signed by a parent that shows the following:

- Date(s) of absence
- Reason for absence
- Parent's signature

Check with the campus to see if reasons can be emailed or if a documented phone call is acceptable.

The following are recognized by the school administration as proper reasons for an absence:

- Sickness of pupil
- Death in the immediate family
- Religious holidays
- Participation in an activity under the direction of a LHISD staff member
- To sound taps at a military funeral
- To serve as an election clerk
- To participate in a ceremony to obtain citizenship
- An emergency or special set of circumstances judged as sufficient by the school authorities

In addition, when a student whose parent or legal guardian who is in the armed services is called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted excused absences at the discretion of the superintendent.

Attendance records

Teacher attendance records are subject to audit by the Texas Education Agency auditors at any time. All information must be complete and correct according to directions given to you by your principals. **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TEACHER (working in conjunction with the registrar) TO GET A COMPLETED ENROLLMENT FORM FOR EACH STUDENT, WITH EMERGENCY NUMBERS AND ALL NECESSARY INFORMATION FOR ATTENDANCE PURPOSES, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.**

Mastery

As set forth in Subchapter B, C, and D of Chapter 75.193, student academic achievement shall be determined based only on degree of mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the grade level, subject, or course. All students shall demonstrate an acceptable level of mastery of the TEKS of a subject or course that is sufficient for successful performance at the next subject or grade level as a prerequisite to earning a grade of 70 or above pursuant to the Texas Education Code 21.721. The acceptable level of mastery shall be set to ensure that all students are challenged for maximum performance.

Variations in procedures and academic achievement-level expectations for awarding grades to special education students shall be determined by the Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee and included in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Grading modifications for 504 students and ELL will be included in the educational plans.

Instructional planning

Teachers are expected to know the TEKS in their respective subject areas. All teachers should know the College and Career Readiness Standards and the English Language Proficiency Standards.

In core subject areas, teachers are expected to follow the district curriculum documents. These documents are used to define the curriculum and instructional pace throughout the school year. Common assessments will be given at the end of units of study. Several shorter units can be combined into one common assessment. At least one common assessment will be given each six weeks.

Direct, systematic instruction of skills, concepts, and processes as identified in the curriculum documents is expected. Teachers will integrate math, reading, and writing skills in all content areas.

A multi-sensory, differentiated approach to instruction is expected of all teachers. This will require small group, collaborative instruction and higher order thinking and questioning. Students must be engaged and must see the relevancy of concepts they are learning. Teachers should use a variety of supplemental materials and technology to maintain interest and to address student needs in problem solving and content mastery.

Reteaching

It is our job to see that students are successful. They have to believe they can be successful to keep trying. When there is a deficit in the student's knowledge and skill, reteaching, which involves presenting objectives in a different way, is necessary. Teachers should not allow significant gaps in learning to exist without reteaching efforts. Thus, the decision for the teacher becomes what approach to use in reteaching and which objectives need to be retaught.

Retesting

For all grades, **retesting** needs to occur as soon as possible after reteaching. When mastery has been demonstrated, the failing grade will be changed. **Grades should reflect the eventual mastery of content** and not how long it took the student to mastery the objectives.

Communication

Throughout the grading period, teachers should make a concerted effort to share concerns regarding a student's progress and grades with both the student and the parents. Teachers will reteach and retest as necessary. Students will be encouraged to do make-up work as needed throughout the grading period. According to state law and District policy, if a student falls below 70 after the third week of any grading period, the parent must be notified through a written progress report. It is advisable to notify parents any time a student is in danger of

receiving a failing grade, even after progress reports have gone out. This procedure fosters good communication, understanding, and positive relations with parents.

Grading period

At 4:00 p.m. on the final day of the grading period, grades become final. No grades may be changed or extra credit work applied to a student's grade after this time.

Incompletes

A six weeks grade of incomplete may be given only under extreme circumstances (such as hospitalization or serious illness of the student, major illness or death of a family member, or other circumstances beyond the student's control) and with written approval of the principal. Under no circumstances will a grade of incomplete be given because of a failing average. The "I" grade is not to be used as a device to enable the student to pass a subject after the last day of the grading period.

Semester exams

A semester exam or EOC shall be given in grades nine through twelve. The semester exam provides a comprehensive test over the entire semester's objectives. For high school exemptions, consult the High School Student Handbook.

Grading Procedures

Grades are computed and reported to parents at the end of each six-week grading period. Progress reports are sent for students in danger of failing after the third week of each grading period. Teachers are encouraged to contact parents anytime a student's average begins to fall.

Grading Guidelines

Grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated and distributed to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines have been reviewed by the curriculum department and have been approved by the campus principal. These guidelines establish the minimum number of assignments required for each grading period. In addition, these guidelines establish how the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated

(i.e., letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, etc.). Procedures for a student to follow after an absence will also be addressed.

Make-up work

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. Students shall be granted a **minimum** of one day for each day of absence to make up work that was missed.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

No grade penalty shall be assigned for completed make-up work after an absence because of suspension. [See EIAB (LOCAL).]

DAEP Makeup Work

A student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, a foundation curriculum course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the course through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA (LEGAL).]

Homework

The term "homework" is defined as an assignment that necessitates a student working at home to complete an assignment begun in class, to strengthen the understanding of a learned concept through the application to written work or problems, or to locate and organize information about a subject through the process of research.

Philosophy

All basic skills and concepts must be taught and practiced while under the teacher's supervision. Homework is independent practice that the student should be able to perform without the teacher's guidance.

Homework should be limited to only that which is necessary for the learning process. Wise use of instructional minutes and close monitoring will reduce the need for additional work to be done at home.

The district does not look with favor upon an inordinate amount of homework. We value families and would like to protect family time for activities other than homework each evening.

Remember that we encourage students to participate in school-related activities, leaving less time for homework. Be sensitive to the fact that many students do not have someone at home to help them with homework.

Guidelines for assigning homework - Assignments for work outside of school hours should follow these guidelines:

- Homework must be meaningful (related to current topics being discussed in class)
- It should never be used as a form of disciplinary action
- Instructions should be complete and clear. Assignments should be individualized when appropriate and compatible with the student's ability. For example, an assignment that takes most students 15 minutes to complete may take a dyslexic or special needs student 45 minutes.
- If the teacher feels that an assignment is important enough to warrant a student's time, it must be looked at and graded or discussed in class within two class periods so that the student is given feedback immediately.
- Because students are usually enrolled in five or more classes, teachers should make certain that the length of time required to complete any given homework assignment is not excessive.
- All LHISD students are expected to read daily. This time should be considered when determining the amount of homework to assign.

Report cards

Grade reports are to be completed following the end of each grading period.

Report cards will be issued the following week.

Testing

The State of Texas Assessment of Achievement Readiness (STAAR), and TELPAS reading are SECURE tests. The confidentiality MUST be protected. Staff shall follow all state guidelines as well as local directives from the principal and counselor. Be aware that certificates can be revoked if there is evidence of cheating, advance review of testing materials, etc.

Accident reports

In order for the superintendent's office to keep a record of student injuries, an injury report form must be completed for each student injury that is severe enough to require a medical attention. This report will be completed and filed by the campus nurse.

Liabilities of parent for conduct of child

Section 33.01–Liability. A parent or other person who has the duty or control and reasonable discipline of a child is liable for any property or damage caused by:

- The negligent conduct of the child if the conduct is reasonably attributable to the negligent failure of the parent or other person to exercise that duty; or
- The willful and malicious conduct of a child who is at least 12 years of age and under 18 years of age.

●
Section 32.02 - Limits of Recovery. Recovery for damage caused by willful or malicious conduct is limited to actual damages, not to exceed \$15,000 plus court costs and reasonable attorney fees.

Section 33.03 – Venue. A suit under this chapter may be brought in the county where the conduct of the child occurred or in the county where the defendant resides.

Vandalism

Each employee of the district shall report to the principal every incident of vandalism and, if known, the names of those responsible.

The superintendent is authorized to sign a criminal complaint and to press charges against the perpetrators of vandalism against school property, and is further authorized to delegate authority to sign such complaints, to press charges, and to seek compensation for all damages and/or losses.

Any student found guilty of any form of vandalism or defacement of school property will be required to make restitution to the school district. Parents or guardians of students who destroy or vandalize school property will be held liable for all damages incurred as provided by the Texas Family Code.

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