

# 2017-2018 Employee Handbook

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# Employee Handbook Receipt

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

**I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Dumas 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.

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 \_\_\_\_\_ if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign and date this receipt and forward it to your campus principal.

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all district policies and procedures are included. Those that are have been summarized.

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

# **District Information**

## **Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives**

### **Mission Statement**

Dumas Independent School District expects excellence by embracing the concepts of effective schools.

A positive learning environment will be established and maintained by the shared responsibility of all personnel through their respective leadership abilities.

Academic achievement will be developed through instructional consistency, maximum learning time, and a flexible curriculum, which will guide the students to become successful and productive members of society.

A consistent manner of accounting using a variety of assessment methods will be used to ensure that students are tested over material taught and that mastery is achieved.

The educational setting will provide a safe, secure, clean, attractive environment that promotes a supportive atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning.

Based on the fact that everyone can learn, Dumas Independent School District personnel, parents, and community will encourage students to strive for their highest potential.

Realizing that parents are also the child's teachers, school personnel will be responsive to and encourage parental involvement in the student's learning process.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Staff Development – The District will provide staff development to achieve Excellence in Education for all students.

Student Productivity – The District will meet or exceed state academic standards. In addition, the district will be highly competitive in all areas of school related activities.

Reading – The District will develop and implement strategies for students to achieve and maintain skills necessary to read and comprehend on grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, which will enable students to become lifelong learners.

Students Who Are At-Risk Of Dropping Out Of School – The District will develop and implement techniques and strategies to create avenues of success for students identified as at-risk of dropping out of school.

Community-Parental-Student Involvement – The District will encourage community and parental involvement in the educational process of the student to foster the development of the total child.

Technology – The District will develop concepts and implement them to maintain the utilization of technology to the highest degree.

Facilities – The District will develop and maintain a plan that will ensure that facilities are conducive to a quality learning environment.

### **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, and employment of the superintendent and other professional staff, facilities, and expansions. The board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal law and regulations.

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

Board members: President Brent Clark, Vice-President Patty Willis, Secretary Patty Kirk Pope and board members Jay Davis, Chris Johnson, Joe Rammage, and Brandon Skipworth.

Trustees usually meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays of each month at 7 p.m. In the event that large attendance is anticipated, the board may meet at the high school library. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website [www.dumasisd.org](http://www.dumasisd.org) and at the central 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 will 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 legislation.

## Administration

Monty Hysinger – Superintendent	Kurt Baxter – Principal, Junior High
Greg Lewis – Asst. Superintendent for Business	Erin Pingelton – Asst. Principal, Junior High
Kelly Legg – Assistant Superintendent for Instruction	Stan Williams – Asst. Principal, Junior High
Phil Guerra – Assistant Superintendent for Personnel	Philip Rhodes – Principal, Intermediate School
Daniel West – Chief Financial Officer	Rebecca Cruz – Asst. Principal Intermediate School
Sally Heaton – Secondary Curriculum Director	Caynon Strickland – Asst. Principal, Intermediate School
Lisa Hatley –Elementary Curriculum Director	T.J. Funderburg – Principal, Cactus Elementary
James Bussard – Director of Special Services	Terri Davis- Asst. Principal, Cactus Elementary
Cindy Rhoades – PIEMS Coordinator	Andrea Cox – Principal, Green Acres Elementary
Brett Beesley – Principal, High School	Traci Guerra – Asst. Principal, Green Acres Elementary
Keely Chumley – Asst. Principal, High School	Stephanie Schilling – Principal, Hillcrest Elementary
Aaron Dunnam - Asst. Principal, High School	Stan Stroebel – Principal, Morningside Elementary
Marcus Bellar – Asst. Principal, High School	Nissa Dunnam – Asst. Principal, Morningside Elementary
Carl Clements – Principal NPOC	Kelly D. Carrell – Principal, Sunset Elementary

# Employment

## Equal Employment Opportunity

*Policy DAA, DIA*

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

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment should contact Monty Hysinger, Superintendent, the district's Title IX coordinator. Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the bases of a disability should contact James Bussard, the district ADA/Section 504 coordinator. Questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any other reason should be directed to the Superintendent.

## Job Vacancy Announcements

*Policy DC Series*

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

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

## Contract and Non-Contract Employment

*Policies DC Series*

State law requires the district to employ all full-time professional and administrative employees in positions requiring a certificate from 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 and others listed in policy DCB (Local) 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 also may 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 be extended for two years (See policy DCA (Local). 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 teachers, professionals, and administrators employed in positions requiring SBEC certification, nurses and others as listed in policy DCB who have successfully completed the probationary period will be employed by term contracts. 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.

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

## Certification and Licenses

*Policies DBA, DF*

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

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

## Recertification of Employment Authorization

*Policy DC*

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

Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization, or employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel's office if you have any questions regarding reverification of employment authorization.

## Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

*Policy CQ, DHE*

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

**Employees required to have a commercial driver's license.** Any employee who is required to have 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 when 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 when an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs returns to duty.

All employees required to have a CDL or are otherwise 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 policies and related educational material should contact the Director of Operations.

## Health Safety Training

*Policy DBA, DMA*

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification to the Athletic Director by September 1.

## Reassignments and Transfers

*Policy DK*

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the superintendent. Campus reassignments must be approved by the principal at the receiving campus. When reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes, the superintendent has final placement authority. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the district process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and district policy DGBA (Local).

Employees 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. Teachers requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit their request by **May 1**. 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 Assistant Superintendent for Personnel's office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

## Workload and Work Schedules

*Policy DEAB, DK, DL*

**Professional employees:** Professional employees 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 posted on the DISD web page.

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. 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**

*Policy DK, DBA*

In schools receiving Title I funds, the district is also 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 days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. **This notice is not required if parental notice under ESSA is sent.** Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and or individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel.

## **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 of 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 conflict of interest.

## **Performance Evaluation**

*Policy DN Series*

Evaluation of an employee's job performance should be a continual 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 according to TEA rules. 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**

*Policy BQA, BQB*

At both the campus and district levels, Dumas ISD offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees. As part of the district's planning and decision-making process, employees are elected to serve on district- or campus-level advisory committees. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision-making process are available in each campus office or from the superintendent's office.

## **Staff Development**

*Policy DMA*

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

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, and addressed in the campus improvement plan, which is 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.

# Compensation and Benefits

## Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

*Policy 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 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 overtime hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See *Overtime Compensation*)

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

Employees should contact the Assistant Superintendent for Business for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

## Paychecks

All employees are paid monthly through direct deposit at a bank, savings and loan, credit union or other financial institution. Any changes to your financial institute account information must be provided to Payroll Department at Central Office by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.

During the school year, employees' wage and earning statements are e-mailed to each employee. These statements will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the statement without the employee's written authorization.

Employees are paid on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month, or the last workday prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month if the 25<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or holiday.

## Payroll Deductions

*Policy CFEA*

Automatic payroll deductions for the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and federal income tax are required for all full-time employees. Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired in this district after March 31, 1986). Child support and spousal maintenance, if applicable. Delinquent federal education loan payments, if applicable.

Other payroll deductions employees may elect to include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for health, dental, life and visual insurance; annuities; and higher education savings plans or prepaid tuition programs. Savings deposits and loan payments through Moore County School Federal Credit Union. Employees also may request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations and certain charitable contributions approved by the board. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

**Changes to payroll deductions must be submitted in writing to the Payroll Department by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.**

## 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 non-exempt 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 work week and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Non-exempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. Sunday and ends at Midnight Saturday.

Non-exempt 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 at time-and-a-half (comp time) or direct pay with compensatory time off or direct pay at time-and-a-half rates. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 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.

## Travel Expense Reimbursement

*Policy DEE*

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

## Health and Life Insurance

*Policy CRD*

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

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

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

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each year or when they experience a qualifying event (e.g. marriage, divorce, birth). **An employee will have 30 days to make this change.** Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact the Assistant Superintendent for Business' office for more information.

## Supplemental Insurance Benefits

*Policy CRD*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for dental, cancer and disability. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Assistant Superintendent for Business' office for more information.

## Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

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

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

## Workers' Compensation Insurance

*Policy CRE*

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from Public Workers Compensation Program, effective September 1, 1992. Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case.

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

## Unemployment Compensation Insurance

*Policy CRF*

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

## Teacher Retirement

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four and one-half months are members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). Substitute's 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 TRS 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.trstexas.gov](http://www.trstexas.gov))

## **Sick Leave Bank**

Each year at the start of school, we offer each eligible employee the opportunity to join the Sick Leave Bank. Some pertinent facts about the program follow:

The bank is a pool of sick leave days established by DISD employees who agree to contribute one day of local sick leave to be used by any member of the bank who has to miss work beyond their accumulated leave for reasons specified in the Sick Leave Bank Program.

To be eligible, you must be entitled to sick leave benefits as defined in policy and you must have worked for the district at least one year as of September 1.

Membership is strictly voluntary and you may cancel membership at any time. However, the days you have previously contributed to the bank will not be returned.

The purpose of the program is to provide additional sick leave benefits to member employees who have exhausted all other paid leave due to a qualifying illness that occurs during regularly scheduled duty days. There are three separate and distinct plans in the sick leave bank program. Plan A provides members with up to 120 days of additional paid leave based on the employee's own catastrophic physical illness. Plan B provides members with up to 20 days of additional paid leave based on the catastrophic physical illness of the employee's spouse, parent, or child. Plan C provides bank members with an additional 20 days of paid leave for absences resulting from the employee's own unexpected incapacitating physical or mental illness. However, each day granted from any plan under this program shall be paid at 70% of the employee's normal daily rate of pay.

## **Retirement Recognition Program**

*Regulation DEAA-R*

Employees who have completed 20 years or more of continuous employment with Dumas ISD shall receive a cash reward upon their retirement from the district if the employee concurrently applies and is approved for retirement benefits under the provisions of TRS. The award shall be calculated on an unused leave component coupled with a years of service component, not to exceed the maximum award allowed for years of service. This award shall be made as supplemental pay in the employee's last paycheck and shall be subject to the ordinary payroll taxes and other deductions as required by law.

# Leaves and Absences

Policy DEC, DECA, DECB  
Regulations DEC-R1, DEC-R2

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

Paid leave will be recorded in ½ work day increments for exempt employees and in hundredths of an hour for nonexempt employees. Earned compensatory time must be used before any available paid state and local leave. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order:

- Local Leave or PTO
- State Sick Leave accumulated prior to 95-96 school year
- State Personal Leave

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

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

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

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

**Medical Certification.** Any employee who is absent more than five 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 re-productive services.

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

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

## Personal Leave

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of personal leave is equivalent to the number of hours per day in an employee's usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time. There is no limit on the accumulation of state personal leave, and it can be transferred to other Texas school districts and is generally transferable to education service centers. Personal leave may be used for two general purposes: non-discretionary and discretionary.

**Non-discretionary:** Leave taken for personal or family illness, 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 leave may be used in the same manner at 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 in advance of the anticipated absence to his or her principal or supervisor. 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. Discretionary leave may not last more than five consecutive workdays.

**Leave Proration:** If an employee separates from employment with the district before his or her last duty day of the year, or begins employment after the first duty day, state personal leave will be prorated based on the actual time employed. When an employee separates from employment

before the last duty day of the school year, the employee's final paycheck will be reduced by the amount of state personal leave the employee used beyond his or her pro rata entitlement for the school year.

## State Sick Leave

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State sick leave can be used only in half day increments for exempt employees and hundredths of an hour for non-exempt employees except in the following situations: When coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis.

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

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

## Local Leave

### Exempt Employees:

All exempt employees shall earn paid local leave days per duty year commensurate with the number of duty days and schedule required for each position, as listed in regulation DEC-R1.

Local leave shall accumulate to a maximum of 30 leave days.

Local leave shall be used according to the terms and conditions of state sick leave accumulated before the 1995–96 school year, except that an employee may contribute local leave to a sick leave bank.

An employee may also use local leave for absences related to the birth or placement of a child when leave is taken within the first year after the child's birth, adoption, or foster placement ("bonding").

### Nonexempt Employees:

All nonexempt employees shall earn local PTO commensurate with the number of duty days and schedule required for each position as listed in regulation DEC-R2.

Local PTO shall accumulate to a maximum number of hours in accordance with administrative regulations and shall be based on the nonexempt employee's position.

Local PTO shall be used according to the terms and conditions of state personal leave, except that discretionary use of PTO by a nonexempt employee in a position normally requiring 12 months of service per duty year shall not exceed ten consecutive workdays.

## Family and Medical Leave

### Family and Medical Leave (FML) 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.

**Basic Leave Entitlement** – The FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

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

**Military Family Leave Entitlements** – An eligible employee whose spouse, son, daughter or parent is on covered active duty or called to covered active duty status may use his or her 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is (1) a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness\*; or (2) a veteran who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable at any time during the five-year period prior to the first date the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for the covered veteran, and who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness.\*

\*The FMLA definitions of “serious injury or illness” for current service members and veterans are distinct from the FMLA definition of “serious health condition”.

**Benefits and Protections:** During FMLA, the employer must maintain the employee’s health coverage under any “group health plan” on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA, 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.

Use of FML cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee’s leave.

**Eligibility Requirements:** Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least one year, for 1,250 hours of the previous 12 months\*, and if at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

\*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 a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employer’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 treatment.

**Use of Leave:** An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to disrupt the employer’s operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

**Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave:** Employees may choose or employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FML. In order to use paid leave for FML, employees must comply with the employer’s normal paid leave policies.

**Employee Responsibilities:** Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FML when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer’s normal call-in process.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions; the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FML was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

**Employer Responsibilities:** Covered employers must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees’ rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FML and the amount of leave counted against the employee’s leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FML, the employer must notify the employee.

**Unlawful Acts by Employers:** The FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to: interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right protected under the FMLA; discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to the FMLA.

**Enforcement:** An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor 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 which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

FMLA section 109 (29 U.S.C. §2619) required FMLA covered employers to post the text of this notice.  
Regulations 29 C.F.R. § 825.300 (a) may require additional disclosures.

For additional information:

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

## Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions

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

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

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

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

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

**Reinstatement.** An employee returning to work at the end of FML will be returned to the same position held when the leave began or to an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment. In certain cases, instructional employees desiring to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue on family and medical leave until the end of the semester. The additional time off is not counted against the employee's FML entitlement, and the district will maintain the employees' group health insurance and reinstate the employee at the end of the leave according 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 the Assistant Superintendent for Business' office for details on eligibility, requirements and limitations.

## Temporary Disability Leave

*Policy DEC*

**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. Pregnancy and conditions related to pregnancy are treated the same as any other temporary disability. Temporary disability leave must be taken as a continuous block of time. It may not be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule.

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. The leave 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 days.

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

When an employee is ready to return to work, the superintendent or designee of schools shall 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 do the job. Certified employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned if an appropriate position is available. If an appropriate position is not available, the employee may be assigned to another campus, subject to the approval of the campus principal. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, the employee will be reinstated to a position at the original campus at the beginning of the following school year.

## Workers' Compensation Benefits

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

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



employee will only receive workers' compensation wage benefits for any absence resulting from a work-related illness or injury, which may not equal his or her pre-illness or -injury wage.

## **Assault Leave**

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to anyone who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person non-responsible for purposes of criminal liability.

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

## **Bereavement Leave**

Use of state leave and/or local sick leave for death in the immediate family shall not exceed 15 workdays per occurrence. Exceptions may be granted by the superintendent.

## **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.

## **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 personal 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.

## **Truancy Court Appearances**

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

## **Religious Observance**

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

## **Military Leave**

**Paid leave for military service.** Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized Urban Search and Rescue Team is entitled to be paid when engaged in authorized training or duty ordered 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 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 (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. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment within the period of time specified by law to the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years.

**Continuation of health insurance:** Employees who perform service in the uniformed services may elect to continue their health plan coverage at their own cost for a period not to exceed 24 months. Employees should contact the Assistant Superintendent for Business' office for details on eligibility requirements and limitations.

# Complaints and Grievances

Policy DGBA (Local)  
Guiding Principals – Informal Process

The Board encourages employees to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with their supervisor, principal, or other appropriate administrator. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

## Direct Communication with Board Members

Employees shall not be prohibited from communicating with a member of the Board regarding District operations except when communication between an employee and a Board member would be inappropriate because of a pending hearing or appeal related to the employee.

Formal Process - If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the employee, he or she may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, employees are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. An employee whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or “mini-trial” at any level.

## Notice to Employees

The District shall inform employees of this policy.

Freedom From Retaliation - Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against an employee for bringing a concern or complaint.

Whistleblower Complaints - Whistleblower complaints shall be filed within the time specified by law and may be made to the Superintendent or designee beginning at Level Two. Time lines for the employee and the District set out in this policy may be shortened to allow the Board to make a final decision within 60 calendar days of the initiation of the complaint. [See DG]

Complaints Against Supervisors - Complaints alleging a violation of law by a supervisor may be made to the Superintendent or designee. Complaints alleging a violation of law by the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board or designee.

Complaints - In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning. This policy shall apply to all employee complaints, except as provided below.

Exceptions - This policy shall not apply to:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination, including violations of Title IX (gender), Title VII (sex, race, color, religion, national origin), ADEA (age), or Section 504 (disability). [See DIA]
2. Complaints alleging certain forms of harassment, including harassment by a supervisor and violations of Title VII. [See DIA]
3. Complaints concerning retaliation relating to discrimination and harassment. [See DIA]
4. Complaints concerning instructional materials. [See EFA]
5. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District. [See CKE]
6. Complaints arising from the proposed nonrenewal of a term contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Education Code. [See DFBB]
7. Complaints arising from the proposed termination or suspension without pay of an employee on a probationary, term, or continuing contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Education Code during the contract term. [See DFAA, DFBA, or DFCA, respectively]

## General Provisions – Filing

Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, fax, or U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Fax filings shall be timely filed if they are received on or before the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the fax copy. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

Response - At Levels One and Two, “response” shall mean a written communication to the employee from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered or sent by U.S. Mail to the employee’s mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

Days - “Days” shall mean District business days, unless otherwise noted. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day a document is filed is “day zero.” The following business day is “day one.”

Representative - “Representative” shall mean any person who or an organization that does not claim the right to strike and is designated by the employee to represent him or her in the complaint process.

The employee may designate a representative through written notice to the District at any level of this process. If the employee designates a representative with fewer than three days’ notice to the District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the District’s counsel. The District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

Consolidating Complaints - Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. Employees shall not bring separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

When two or more complaints are sufficiently similar in nature and remedy sought to permit their resolution through one proceeding, the District may consolidate the complaints.

Untimely Filings - All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.

If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the employee, at any point during the complaint process. The employee may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within ten days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

Costs Incurred - Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

Complaint Form - Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the employee does not have copies of these documents, they may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the employee unless the employee did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed, but may be re-filed with all the required information if the re-filing is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

Audio Recording - As provided by law, an employee shall be permitted to make an audio recording of a conference or hearing under this policy at which the substance of the employee's complaint is discussed. The employee shall notify all attendees present that an audio recording is taking place.

**Level One** - Complaint forms must be filed:

1. Within 15 days of the date the employee first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem. In most circumstances, employees on a school campus shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal; other District employees shall file Level One complaints with their immediate supervisor. If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forwards the complaint form to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and hold a conference with the employee within ten days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The administrator shall provide the employee a written response within ten days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

**Level Two** - If the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level One response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Level Two administrator. The employee may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the employee at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Superintendent or designee shall hold a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues presented by the employee at Level One and identified in the Level Two appeal notice. At the conference, the employee may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The Superintendent or designee may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the employee a written response within ten days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the Superintendent or designee may consider the Level One record, information

provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Superintendent or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

**Level Three** - If the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may appeal the decision to the Board.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level Two response deadline.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform the employee of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the Board.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two complaint. The employee may request a copy of the Level Two record.

The Level Two record shall include:

1. The Level One record.
2. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
3. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

If at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the employee notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.

The District shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. [See BE]

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation including an opportunity for the employee and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

In addition to any other record of the Board meeting required by law, the Board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three presentation. The Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the employee or the employee's representative, any presentation from the administration, and questions from the Board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio recording, or court reporter.

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Issued: 10/21/2009 Update 86

# 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

#### Purpose and Scope

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

#### Enforceable

##### 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 or 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 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 who 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.

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 harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal or supervisor. If the campus principal or supervisor is the subject of a complaint, the complaint should be made directly to the superintendent. A complaint made against the superintendent may be made directly to the board.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment is as follows:

### EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WELFARE: FREEDOM FROM HARASSMENT

*DIA (LOCAL)*

**Note:** This policy addresses discrimination, harassment and retaliation involving District employees. In this policy, the term "employees" includes former employees and applicants for employment. For discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving students, see FFH. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

**STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION:** The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy.

**DISCRIMINATION:** Discrimination against an employee is defined as conduct directed at an employee on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the employee's employment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PROHIBITED CONDUCT:** In this policy, the term "prohibited conduct" includes discrimination, harassment, and retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

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

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

**DEFINITION OF DISTRICT OFFICIALS:** For the purposes of this policy, District officials are the Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and the Superintendent.

**TITLE IX COORDINATOR:** Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Title IX coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:

Name: Monty Hysinger  
Position: Superintendent  
Address: Box 615, Dumas, TX 79029  
Telephone: (806) 935-6461

**ADA/SECTION 504 COORDINATOR:** Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the ADA/Section 504 coordinator.

The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Name: James Bussard  
Position: Special Services Director  
Address: Box 615, Dumas, TX 79029  
Telephone: (806) 935-6461

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

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

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

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

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

**INVESTIGATION OF THE REPORT:** The District may request, but shall not insist upon, a written report. If a report is made orally, the District official shall reduce the report to written form.

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

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

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

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

**CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION:** Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten district business days from the date of the report. However, the investigator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

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

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

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

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

**APPEAL:** A complainant who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through DGBA(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.

The complainant may have a right to file a complaint with appropriate state or federal agencies.



**RECORDS RETENTION:** Copies of reports alleging prohibited conduct, investigation reports, and related records shall be maintained by the District for a period of at least three years. [See CPC]

**ACCESS TO POLICY:** This policy shall be distributed annually to District employees. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the District administrative offices.

**DATE ISSUED: 8/13/2008**

**LDU 2008.05**

**DIA(LOCAL)-B**

## **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. 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 or abuse 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 for additional information.

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

"Solicitation of a romantic relationship" means deliberate or repeated acts that can be reasonably interpreted as soliciting a relationship characterized by an ardent emotional attachment or pattern of exclusivity. Acts that constitute the solicitation of a romantic relationship include:

1. Behavior, gestures, expressions, communications, or a pattern of communication with a student that is unrelated to the educator's job duties and that may reasonably be interpreted as encouraging the student to form an ardent or exclusive emotional attachment to the educator, including statements of love, affection, or attraction. When evaluating whether communications constitute the solicitation of a romantic relationship, the following may be considered:
  - a. The nature of the communications;
  - b. The timing of the communications;
  - c. The extent of the communications;
  - d. Whether the communications were made openly or secretly;
  - e. The extent to which the educator attempted to conceal the communications;
  - f. If the educator claims to be counseling a student, TEA staff may consider whether the educator's job duties include counseling, whether the educator reported the subject of the counseling to the student's guardians or to the appropriate school personnel, or, in the case of alleged abuse or neglect, whether the educator reported the abuse or neglect to the appropriate law enforcement agencies, and
  - g. Any other communications tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with the student.
2. Making inappropriate comments about a student's body.
3. Making sexually demeaning comments to a student.
4. Making comments about a student's potential sexual performance.
5. Requesting details of a student's sexual history.
6. Requesting a date.
7. Engaging in conversations regarding the sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party.
8. Inappropriate hugging, kissing or excessive touching.
9. Suggestions that a romantic relationship is desired after the student graduates, including post-graduation plans for dating or marriage.

10. Any other acts tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with the student, including providing the student with drugs or alcohol.

Reports - A superintendent, who is required to file a report, but fails to timely do so, is subject to sanctions. The superintendent shall notify the Board of District and the educator of the filing of the report.

Immunity - A superintendent who is good faith and while acting in an official capacity files a report with SBEC is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.

Education Code 21.006; 19 TAC 249.14

DATE ISSUED: 5/29/2008

Update 83

DF (LEGAL)-P

### **STUDENT WELFARE: FREEDOM FROM HARASSMENT FFH (LOCAL)**

This policy addresses discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving District students. For provisions regarding discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving District employees, see DIA. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG. For provisions regarding bullying, see FFI.

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

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

Prohibited harassment - Prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

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

Prohibited harassment includes dating violence as defined by this policy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dating Violence - Dating violence occurs when one partner in a dating relationship, either past or current, intentionally uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other partner.

Examples - Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

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

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

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

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

Examples - Examples of retaliation include threats, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances, such as negative comments that are justified by a student's performance in the classroom.

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

Reporting Procedures - Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another student has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee.

Alternatively, a student may report prohibited conduct directly to one of the District officials below:

Definition of District Officials - For the purposes of this policy, District officials are the Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and the Superintendent.

Title IX Coordinator - Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Title IX coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:

Name: Monty Hysinger  
 Position: Superintendent  
 Address: Box 615, Dumas, TX 79029  
 Telephone: (806) 935-6461

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

Name: James Bussard  
 Position: Special Services Director  
 Address: Box 615, Dumas, TX 79029  
 Telephone: (806) 935-6461

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Access to Policy - Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to District employees and included in the student handbook.

Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

Issued: 2/18/2010

## Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

*Policy 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 person with a disability.

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to a 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 make the required report may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Texas Educators Code of Ethics.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agencies. In addition, employees must cooperate with child abuse and neglect investigators. Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report to the appropriate state agency. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

## Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, which may be accessed at [dumasisd.org](http://dumasisd.org). 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. 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. 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).

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, e-mail accounts, devices connected to its network, and all district-owned devices used on or off school property are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

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

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

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

## Personal Use of Electronic Communications

*Policy CQ, DH, DH- R2*

Electronic communications includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), wikis, electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Web sites (e.g. YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram). Electronic communications 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 communications as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic communications interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for Web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

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

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network or equipment.
- The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, 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 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 purposes or is required by law. (See Policy DH (Exhibit))
  - Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses. (See Policy GBA)
  - Copyright law (See Policy CY)
  - Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a college or the school system. (See Policy DH (Exhibit)).

See *Use of Electronic Communications between Employees and 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 use electronic communication with students who are currently enrolled in the district. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. Electronic communications between all other employees and students who are enrolled in the district are prohibited. Employees are not required to provide students with their personal phone number or e-mail address.

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

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

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

- **Electronic Communications** means any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes email, text messages, instant messages, and any communication made through an Internet website, including a social media website or a social networking website.

- **Communicate** means to convey information and includes 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 employees' personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*; however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.
- **Certified or licensed employee** means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

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

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

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

- 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 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, including:
  - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Right 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 DH)
  - Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently-enrolled students.
  - Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communication with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.
  - An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.
  - An employee shall notify his or supervisor in writing within one business day if a student engages in an improper electronic communication with the employee. The employee should describe the form and content of the electronic communication.

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**

*Policies 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, but is not limited to, the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft
- Misrepresentation
- Deliberate violence
- Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify 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 distributes any controlled substance
- Felonies involving driving while intoxicated (DWI)
- Acts constituting abuse or neglect under SBEC rules

If an educator is arrested or criminally charged, the superintendent is also required to report the educators' criminal history to the Division of Investigation at TEA.

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

*Policies DH, FNCD, GKA, DI*

The Dumas ISD is committed to maintaining a drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of illegal drugs in the workplace. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed. The district's policy on drug abuse and drug-free schools follows:

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

- Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
- Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.
- Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation.
- Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drugs.

An employee need not be legally intoxicated to be considered "under the influence" of a controlled substance.

**Exception:** An employee who uses a drug authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for that employee's use shall not be considered to have violated this policy.

**Notice:** Each employee shall be given a copy of the districts notice regarding drug-free schools. [See DI (EXHIBIT)]

A copy of this policy, the purpose of which is to eliminate drug abuse from the workplace, shall be provided each employee at the beginning of each year or upon employment.

### **DI Exhibit**

#### **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE NOTICE**

The District prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of controlled substances, illegal drugs, inhalants, and alcohol in the workplace.

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

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

As a condition of employment, an employee shall:

- Abide by the terms of this notice; and
- Notify the Superintendent, in writing, if the employee is convicted for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace. The employee must provide the notice in accordance with DH (LOCAL).

[This notice complies with the requirements of the federal Drug-Free Workplace Act (41 U.S.C. 702).]

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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. 3324a 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 includes, but is not limited to, 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
- Misappropriates 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 disclosures 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

## **Conflicts of Interest**

*Policy CB, DBD*

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

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

**Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.**

## **Gifts and Favors**

*Policy DBD*

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

## **Copyrighted Materials**

*Policy CY*

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of 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 or backups 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.

## **Charitable Contributions**

*Policy DG*

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

## **Safety**

*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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the Director of Operations at 935-4710.

## **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, illegal knives, or other weapons onto school premises 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, unloaded, and not in plain view. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisors or call Larry Payne, DISD Chief of Police, immediately.

## **Visitors in 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 Director of Operations office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

## **Pest Control Treatment**

*Policies DI, CLB*

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 main office. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests individualized notice will be notified by telephone, written or electric means. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or the operation director upon request.

## **Personnel Conduct - Dress**

*Policy DH-R*

*This dress code does not apply to the following personnel: Administrative Team members, Maintenance, Transportation and Custodial staff. The dress codes for these employees may be found in DH-R1 and DH-R3.*

Employees shall be expected to maintain a standard of dress, personal appearance, personal hygiene, and general decorum that exemplifies professionalism, modesty and maturity.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE DRESS/APPEARANCE:**

- Men shall wear socks with shoes.
- Males shall not wear their hair tied back in any manner nor shall the hair length extend beyond the bottom of the shirt collar.
- Hair is to be neat, clean, and well-groomed so that vision is not obstructed, and its color, style, and accessories are not to be of a distracting nature.
- Facial hair shall not exceed one inch in length and will be groomed and neat in appearance.
- All clothing shall be clean, neat, in good condition and pressed.
- Clothing shall fit properly.
- Belts are to be worn with clothing so designed for belts.
- Footwear shall be in good condition, clean and polished.
- Professional dress is required for all professional development activities, workshops or conferences provided by Dumas ISD or other professional organizations at any location.
- Underwear visible for any reason is unacceptable.
- Exposure of cleavage is unacceptable.
- Tattoos and piercings must not be visible. The only exception is that female employees may have pierced ears.

The following items or styles of dress are listed for clarification:

**SHIRTS**

- T-shirts are not allowed. (See exception below for Friday Spirit Days – School Spirit t- shirts)
- Sweatshirts are considered appropriate on Casual Days.
- All shirts shall be of such a length as to not expose skin.
- Tops may be worn in combination with leggings provided the top extends to, at least, the top of the kneecap.
- Sleeveless garments are not allowed if worn alone.
- Blouses must have sleeves with an inseam long enough to prevent exposure of the arm pit area. Shoulder caps do not count as sleeves.
- Shirts worn by males must have a collar with the exception of Friday Spirit Days.

**PANTS/SHORTS**

- Jeans of any nature or design, including blue denim or colored, shall not be worn except teacher workdays or Casual days. **Staff development days are not workdays.** (Workdays are those designated at the beginning of school for room preparation, or at the end of a semester, if so designated in the school calendar.)
- Jeans shall be pressed and without holes or frayed areas.
- Female employees may wear knee length shorts

**SKIRTS/DRESSES**

- Skirts and dresses must extend to at least the top of the kneecap.
- Dresses must have sleeves with an inseam long enough to prevent exposure of the arm pit area. Shoulder caps do not count as sleeves.

**ATHLETIC APPAREL**

- Jogging suits, wind suits, or other athletic type apparel shall not be worn except by physical education teachers and then only during physical education classes.
- Athletic shoes shall not be worn except by physical education teachers during physical education classes.

**CASUAL DAYS:**

The district has designated each Friday as Casual Day with the intent being to allow staff members the opportunity to dress casual, but yet professional. In addition, staff members may purchase Casual Day stickers through DEF/DSA donations.

Apparel appropriate on Casual days that is not allowed on other days includes:

- Blue/denim jeans (clean, pressed and in excellent condition)
- Athletic shoes (clean and in excellent condition)
- Sweatshirts

**Note 1: Casual dress does not equate to sloppy, dirty, not pressed or ill-fitting.**

**EXCEPTIONS:**

Friday Spirit Days - Dumas School Spirit t-shirts will be allowed on Fridays only. Shirts must be in school colors (orange, black, white or gray) and promote Dumas ISD schools. (Casual Day stickers may not be used for this exception.)

Exceptions as to appropriate dress for shop-lab teachers to be made by the principal or supervisor.

Principals may grant exceptions to teachers and sponsors of field trips to allow dress appropriate for the occasion.

Exceptions may be granted for medical reasons provided a doctor's recommendation is provided to the principal.

ACC (Life Skills) personnel and nurses may wear athletic shoes and "scrubs" provided they are pressed and fit properly.

Casual day attire may be worn on a day when bus routes have been cancelled due to weather.

Technology Specialists who work in the Technology office may wear jeans on regular work days but shirts must still comply with dress code.

**EVALUATION:**

Infractions will be handled in the following manner:

1<sup>st</sup> infraction – warning & corrected immediately

2<sup>nd</sup> infraction – note in official personnel file & corrected immediately

3<sup>rd</sup> infraction – note in official personnel file and documented in employee's intervention plan (possible termination for non-certified)

The dress and general appearance of the DISD staff is considered to be a high priority and therefore shall be reflected in annual performance evaluations.

# 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 or to release students early, school officials will notify the public through the following:

KDDD 95.3 F.M. – Dumas  
KAMR (4) -TV-Amarillo

KFDA (10) -TV-Amarillo  
KVII (7)-TV – Amarillo

Notices on the DISD Website – [www.dumasid.org](http://www.dumasid.org)

## Emergencies

*Policy CKC, CKD*

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

## Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel's Office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. Forms to process a change in personal information can be obtained from the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel's Office.

## Personnel Records

*Policy DBA, GBA*

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

Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

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

The choice to not allow public access to this information may be made at anytime by submitting a written request to the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel's Office. New or terminated employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information will be released to the public until a request to withhold the information is submitted.

## Building Use

*Policy GKD, DGA*

The Assistant Superintendent for Business, is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact his office to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

# Termination of Employment

## Resignations

*Policy DFE*

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

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 any of the acts listed in *Reports to Texas Education Agency*.

**Non-contract employees:** Non-contract employees may resign their positions 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 Non-Renewal of Contract Employees

*Policies DF Series*

Employees on probationary and term contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be non-renewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The time lines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or non-renewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee. Advanced 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 time lines and procedures can be found in the DF policies that are provided to employees or in the policy manuals located on the DISD web page or the superintendent's office.

## Dismissal of Non-Contract Employees

*Policy DCD*

Non-contract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, 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. Non-contract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See *Complaints and Grievances*).

## Exit Interviews and Procedures Policies

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

## Reports to Texas Education Agency

*Policy DF, DHB*

The resignation or termination of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigation 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 minor
- Soliciting or engaging in a sexual or 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 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 or 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 and or, in the case of a child, 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

*Policy FB, FFH*

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

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

## Student Records

*Policy FL*

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

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

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

## Parent and Student Complaints

*Policy FNG*

In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted orderly processes for handling complaints on different issues. Any campus office or 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 teachers or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved 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. Once all administrative complaint procedures are exhausted, parents and students can bring complaints to the board of trustees.

## Administering Medication to Students

*Policy FFAC*

Only designated employees may administer medication 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 policies 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

*Policy DH, FFAC*

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

## Psychotropic Drugs

*Policy FFAC*

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

Except as permitted by Education Code 38.016, an employee shall not:

1. Recommend to a student or a parent that the student use a psychotropic drug;

2. Suggest a particular diagnosis; or
3. Exclude the student from a class or a school-related activity because of the parent's refusal to consent to psychiatric evaluation or examination or treatment of the 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.

## **Student Attendance**

*Policy FEB*

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the district's policy and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require 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.

## **Bullying**

*Policy FFI*

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

Note: This policy addresses bullying of District Students. For provisions regarding discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving District Students, see FFH. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

**BULLYING PROHIBITED** - The District prohibits bullying as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy.

**DEFINITION** - Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages 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
1. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

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

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

**REPORTING PROCEDURES** - Any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee. A report may be made orally or in writing.

**NOTICE OF REPORT** - Any District employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the campus principal or designee.

**INVESTIGATION OF REPORT** - If a report is made orally, the campus principal or designee shall reduce the report to written form. The campus principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, and if so proceed under that policy instead.

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

**CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION** - Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the report; however, the campus principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The campus principal or designee shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including a determination of whether bullying occurred, and send a copy to the Superintendent or designee.

**DISTRICT ACTION** - If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct. [For information on student transfers due to bullying, see FDB.] The District may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the District concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying under this policy.

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

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

**RECORDS RETENTION** - Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC (LOCAL).

**ACCESS TO POLICY** - Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to District employees and included in the student handbook. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.  
Adopted 5-29-08

## **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 any form of hazing, or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus administrator.



## Appendix

Policies are available on the district website at [www.dumasisd.org](http://www.dumasisd.org) by clicking on “Information”, then “Board of Education” and “School Board Policies”. Regulations are found by clicking on “Information”, then “Administrative” and “District Regulations”. The Employee Handbook can be accessed under “Information”.

DAA – Equal Employment Opportunity  
DAB – Genetic nondiscrimination  
DBAA – Criminal History and Credit Reports  
DBD – Conflict of Interest  
DC Series – Employment Practices  
DEA – Salaries and Wages  
DEC – Leaves and Absences  
DF – Termination of employment  
DFAC – Return to Probationary Status  
DFB Series – Termination of Term Contracts  
DFD – Hearings before Hearing Examiner  
DFE – Resignations  
DFF – Reduction in Force  
DFFA – Reduction in force due to financial exigency  
DFFB – Reduction in force due to program change  
DG – Employee Rights and Privileges  
DGBA – Employee Complaints  
DH – Employees Standards of Conduct  
DHB – SBEC reporting  
DHE – Searches and Drug/Alcohol Testing  
DI – Employee Welfare  
DIA – Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation  
DK – Assignments and Schedules  
DN Series – Performance Appraisal

Chapter 37. Texas Education Code – Safe Schools - Discipline

Chapter 37, sections 37.001 through 37.019 may be accessed through the district website at [www.dumasisd.org](http://www.dumasisd.org) listed under the column “Info for Employees”.

Board Policies FO & FN Series can be accessed at [www.dumasisd.org](http://www.dumasisd.org) by clicking on “Information”, then “Board of Education” and “School Board Policies”. When you click on “School Board Policies”, you will be directed to the Dumas ISD online Board Policy Manual, which can be accessed by searching all policies, entering the policy code or browsing sections or topics.