



GILMER
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Employee Handbook
2016-2017

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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.	56
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Employee Handbook Receipt

Name: _____

Campus/Department: _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Gilmer 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.

The electronic handbook is available to employees at the district website, www.gilmerisd.org or you may obtain a .pdf file by contacting the Technology Department.

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 Superintendent if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

Signature

Date

Please sign and date this receipt and forward it to Judy Moore.

Introduction

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

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

District Information

Description of the District

We at Gilmer ISD consider it a privilege to educate the students of Gilmer and recognize that parents have entrusted us with their most prized possessions – their children. We strive to provide an opportunity for all students to learn on a consistent and fair basis. We believe that education will always be an active partnership linking our schools, the student, the home, and the community.

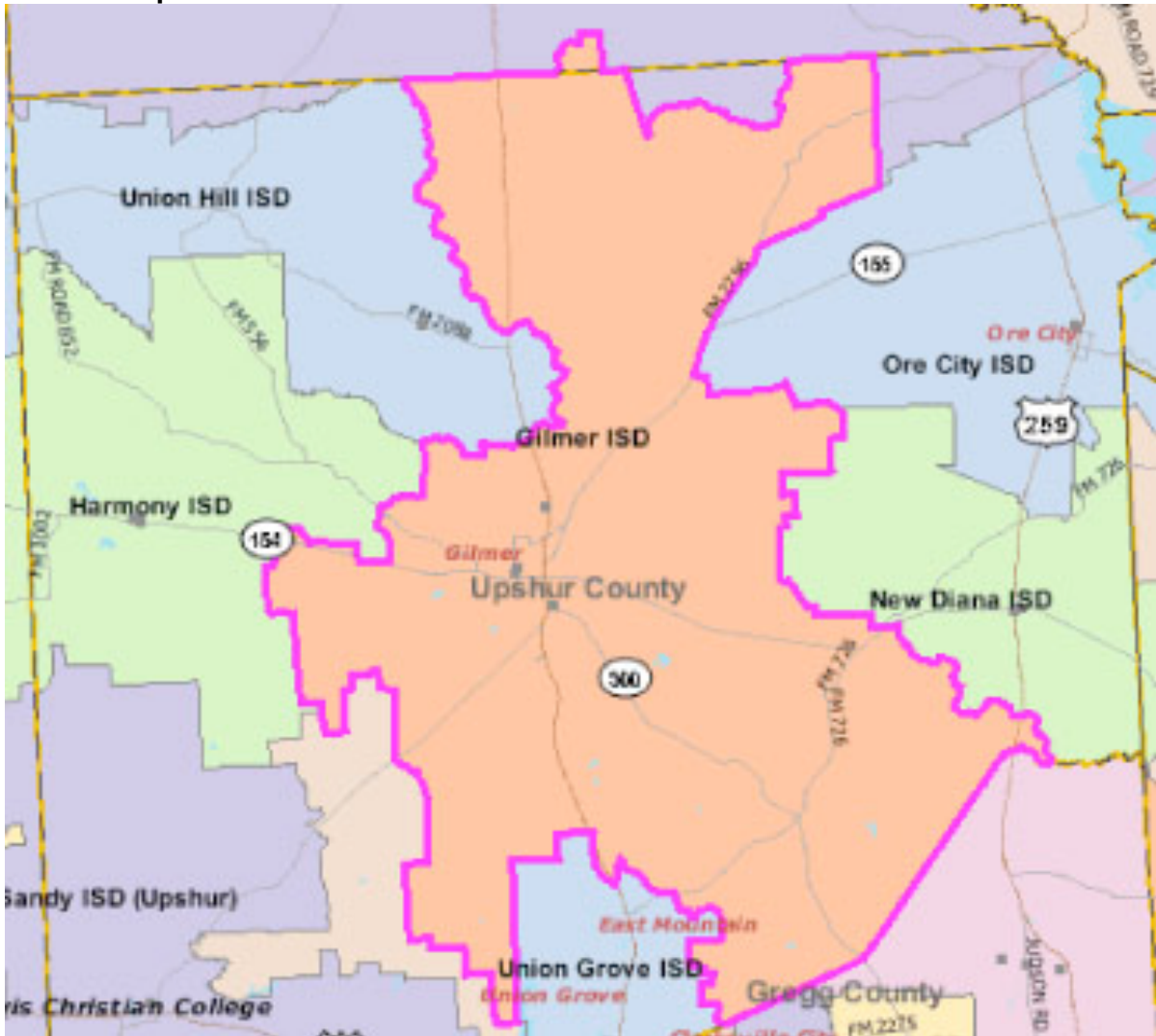
The Gilmer Elementary campus, a pre-kindergarten to grade 4 campus, is situated on 323 acres off US Hwy 271 and is the newest facility in the district. With state of the art technology, Gilmer Elementary provides a teaching environment, where all teachers at one grade level get to know all of the students in their “family” wing.

Gilmer Intermediate is situated adjacent to the elementary school and serves grades 5 and 6. The campus utilizes the academic teaming approach with two teams per grade level working collaboratively to provide the best instructional approach for all students. Teams meet and work together daily to design the best instructional program for its students.

Bruce Junior High serves grades 7 and 8 and is located on US Hwy 271 South. The campus offers numerous electives that support the academic program thereby providing opportunities for students to pursue individual interests.

Gilmer High School serves grades 9 through 12. The school provides a college-ready program for all students. Students can earn up to 31 hours of college credit through dual credit enrollment and can earn additional college credit by taking Advanced Placement classes. GHS is the home of the 2004-3A, 2009-3A and the 2014-4A state champion Buckeyes football team and the twelfth largest FFA program in the state.

District Map



Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

Policy AE

Gilmer ISD:

- prepares every student for the workforce or postsecondary training;
- recognizes and educates each child as a unique individual;
- nurtures academic, social, and cultural differences; and
- develops responsible citizens who contribute to the community's success and strength

Our school believes:

- everyone can learn;
- every child should feel welcome, loved, and safe;
- a solid educational foundation prepares students to fulfill their life's ambitions and dreams;
- extracurricular and co-curricular activities enhance academic achievement;
- every staff member is vital to the educational experience;
- students, educators, parents, and community members share in the responsibility for the encouragement and success of students; and
- learning is a consequence of thinking and doing.

Board of Trustees

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

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

The board of trustees is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the district's children. Board members are elected at-large and serve 3-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

- Deidra Camp
- Lula Johnson
- Gloria King - Secretary
- Mark Skinner - President
- Kenny Southwell – Vice-President
- Clayton Tefteller
- Todd Tefteller

The board usually meets every third Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. In the event that large attendance is anticipated, the board may meet at the High School Auditorium. Special meetings

may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and on the front door of the administration building at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

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

Board Meeting Schedule for 2016-17

August 15, 2016	March 20, 2017
September 19, 2016	April 17, 2017
October 17, 2016	May 15, 2017
November 21, 2016	June 19, 2017
December 12, 2016	July 17, 2017
January 17, 2017 (Tuesday)	
February 20, 2017	

Administration

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

Superintendent	Rick Albritton
Curriculum & Development:	
Assistant Superintendent	Sigrid Yates
Director of Teacher Support and Parent Involvement	Dawn Harris
Technology Services:	
Director of Instructional Technology	Rusty Ivey
Administrative Services:	
Assistant Superintendent	Greg Watson
Operations and Public Relations:	
Assistant Superintendent	Bobby Rice
Director of Maintenance	Jerry Davis
Director of Transportation	Don Morgan
Director of Child Nutrition	Roberta Jones
Supervisor of Custodial Services	Jennifer Hanlin

Business Services:

Director of Finance
Supervisor of Payroll
PEIMS Coordinator
Special Education
Director of Special Education

Beverly Grimes
Ann Bradshaw
Karen Holyfield

Peggy Oden

School Directory

Gilmer ISD Administration Office
500 S. Trinity St.
Gilmer, TX 75644
(903) 841-7400

Gilmer High School
850 Buffalo St.
Gilmer, TX 75644
(903) 841-7500

Bruce Jr. High School
111 Bruce St.
Gilmer, TX 75644
(903) 841-7600

Gilmer Intermediate School
1623 U.S. Highway 271 North
Gilmer, TX 75644
(903) 841-7800

Gilmer Elementary School
1625 U.S. Highway 271 North
Gilmer, TX 75644
(903) 841-7700

Gilmer ISD Transportation Office
201 N. Bradford St.
Gilmer, TX 75644
(903) 841-7469

School Calendar

2016 - 2017 Calendar

August, 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

September, 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

October, 2016						
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						1
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

November, 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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27	28	29	30			

December, 2016						
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January, 2017						
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

2016-2017 Gilmer ISD

First Semester 77 days
Second Semester 97 days

Start Dates: Staff 8/8 Students 8/22
End Dates: Staff 5/26 Students 5/25

Staff Days: 8/8-8/19
Comp/Waiver Days: 8/8, 11/21, 11/22
Early Release: 9/14, 10/19, 12/15, 12/16, 1/13, 5/25

Reporting Periods	Days
1st Six Weeks	29
2nd Six Weeks	23
3rd Six Weeks	25
4th Six Weeks	34
5th Six Weeks	34
6th Six Weeks	29

Total Student Days 174
Staff Development 10
State Waiver Days 3
Total Days 187

School Bell Times

GHS & BJH 8:00 - 3:50
INT & Elem 7:45 - 3:00

Early Release Times

GHS&BJH-12:00 INT&Elem-1:00

Student Holidays

Labor Day Sept. 5
Yamboree Days Oct 20,21
Thanksgiving Nov. 21-25
Christmas Dec.16-Jan 1
MLK Day Jan 16
Spring Break Mar. 13-17
Good Friday April 14

Codes

- School Holiday
- Begin Six Weeks
- End Six Weeks
- Staff Dev. Student Holiday
- Early Release

Contract Dates

10 Month Aug 8 - May 26
11 Month July 25 - June 9
12 Month Days July 1 - June 30

February, 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

March, 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

April, 2017						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

May, 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

June, 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

July, 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

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Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity

Policies DAA, DIA

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

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment should contact Rick Albritton, the district Title IX coordinator. Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should contact Greg Watson, 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

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

Employment After Retirement

Policy DC

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

Contract and Noncontract Employment

Policy DC series

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

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

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

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

Noncertified Professional and Administrative Employees. Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as noninstructional administrators) are not employed by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

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

Certification and Licenses

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 Superintendent'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 Judy Moore if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

Policy CQ, DHE

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

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

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact Greg Watson.

Health Safety Training

Policies DBA, DMA

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, University Interscholastic League, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to the Superintendent's office by August 22, 2016.

Reassignments and Transfers

Policy DK

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

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

Workload and Work Schedules

Policies DEA, DEAB, DK, DL

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

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

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees. Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. See *Overtime Compensation* on page 26 for additional information.

Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk

Policies DEA, DEAB, DG

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

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

Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications

Policies DK, DBA

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

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

Outside Employment and Tutoring

Policy DBD

Employees are required to disclose in writing to their immediate supervisor any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of the district. Supervisors will consider outside employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

Performance Evaluation

Policy DN series

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

Instructional Expectations

Every teacher in the district is expected to:

1. Adhere to the TEKS and the district curriculum documents (e.g., instructional calendar, six week snapshots, model lessons, and year-at-a-glance)
2. Monitor and update curriculum documents annually
3. Use the backward design approach to plan instruction and to develop assessments
4. Use a research-based instructional delivery model:
 - Hooks/Engagement
 - Direct Teach
 - Small Group
 - Centers
 - Modeling
 - Checking for Understanding
 - Guided Practice
 - Closure
 - Independent Practice
 - Re-teach
5. Use strategies to engage students during classroom instruction
6. Participate in collaborative team planning

7. Adhere to the SMART goal process:
 - Set goals (district, campus, team, student)
 - Use agendas for meetings
 - Engage in continuous professional development
 - Research best practices
 - Analyze data
8. Use formal and informal assessments to monitor student achievement, including nine-week assessments, TPRI, DRA, Gold, and other district assessments such as the Gates MacGinite Reading assessment, ITBS, etc.
9. Use a variety of visual media to assist with instruction, such as United Streaming, YouTube University, YouTube for educators, etc.
10. Assess students four times per year with performance tasks, such as:*

Presentations/Performances	Written Forms	Graphic Organizers
Group presentation	Journal	Table
Technology/media	Editorial	Graph
Demonstration/exhibit	Feature story	Technical drawing
Student-led conference	Magazine article	Flowchart
Reenactment	Advertisement	Map/globe
Teach a lesson	Story/Fable/Comic book	Schematic drawing/blueprint
Informative or persuasive speech	Guidebook	Timeline
Skit/play	Sales Brochure	Chart
Marketing/political campaign	Character sketch	Venn diagram

*This is not an exhaustive list of examples.

English/Language Arts Instructional Expectations

District Expectations: (required of all teachers K-12 unless otherwise specified)

1. Teachers will use the vertical alignment documents when planning for instruction and assessment.
2. Teachers must follow the ELA Resource Guide.
3. Reading and writing must occur in every classroom every day of the year. Not all writing must be formal and not all reading must be completed by the student. Teachers must model both reading and writing for all students.
4. Every language arts teacher will be required to keep samples of student work which could be housed in a folder, journal, notebook, composition book, etc.
5. Figure 19 will be taught through think alouds, read alouds, and discourse. (See ELA Resource Guide)
6. Students must be provided frequent opportunities to engage in discourse (conversations) with one another about reading and writing.

Reading:

7. Students must read from a variety of genres, both classical and contemporary, and acquire information from both print and electronic sources.
8. Vocabulary must be taught in context through the reading/literature and assessed at the application level or above.

9. District provided academic background vocabulary must be incorporated into daily lesson planning to ensure uniformity of terminology and understanding.
10. The method for reading and writing instruction will be a balanced literacy approach which must include reader's workshop and writer's workshop.
11. TPRI, running records, and fluency screenings will be used to assess comprehension. (K-2)
12. Letter/sound/word checks will occur weekly. (K)
13. Every student is expected to read at his/her appropriate instructional (grade) level on a daily basis. (K-6)
14. Every student is expected to read at his/her appropriate independent level on a daily basis. (K-6)
15. Students will complete a minimum of three to four novels per year. (5-6)
16. Every student will complete at least six novels and/or extended works per year. (7-12)
17. Comprehension/literacy strategies will be implemented at all grade levels. (See ELA Resource Guide)

Writing:

18. Teachers will be required to implement writing as a process through all stages (prewriting, writing, revising, editing, and publishing).
19. In addition to daily writing activities, writing assignments/responses will emanate from reading/literature instruction.
20. In addition to daily writing activities, every student must complete a minimum of four pieces of writing that has been taken through the process annually. The majority of the process should occur in the classroom, especially the revising and editing stages.
21. Teachers will use Norma Jackson's writing stages to determine growth in writing each six weeks, K-4. (See ELA Resource Guide)
22. Reference and research skills will be taught using the Modern Language Association (MLA) style manual. (9-12)

Training Plan to Support Implementation:

Goal: Train each language arts teacher in instructional strategies to increase student achievement.

- Balanced Literacy
- Abydos Literacy Learning
- Essential Eight for Teaching Writers
- ELA Resource Guide
- Figuring out Figure 19
- Norma Jackson's Stages of Writing (K-4)

Library Instructional Expectations

Gilmer ISD Library Philosophy:

The library is an extension of the classroom that uses technology and media to enhance classroom instruction. The librarian is a teacher who supports fellow teachers and students and serves as enrichment for the classroom.

District Expectations: (K-12)

1. Teacher/Librarian will be familiar with the TEKS and the district curriculum documents (e.g., instructional calendar, six week snapshots, model lessons, year-at-a-glance, and vertical alignment documents) and utilize them in lessons.

2. Teacher/Librarian will adhere to the GISD Library Philosophy.
3. Teacher/Librarian will communicate with teachers (emails, teaming meetings, afterschool meetings, etc.) about upcoming skills being taught in the grade level.
4. Teacher/Librarian will keep a record of lessons, projects, and other assignments in a portfolio (electronic or hard copy).
5. Teacher/Librarian will participate in the same amount of duty assignments as a classroom teacher.
6. Teacher/Librarian will provide professional development on library resources to the campus.
7. Teacher/Librarian will meet with Teacher/Librarians from other campuses weekly to share ideas and collaborate.
8. Teacher/Librarian will attend a library training conference each year.
9. Teacher/Librarian will provide teachers with resources to enhance classroom instruction.
10. Teacher/Librarian will provide extension lessons from the classroom.
11. Teacher/Librarian will assist the teacher in research projects.
12. Teacher/Librarian will allow open times in the library for students to check out books for pleasure reading or academic study.
13. Teacher/Librarian will set up the library according to the needs of the campus.
14. Teacher/Librarian will have the opportunity to utilize student workers to help with re-shelving books, and any other tasks.
15. Teacher/Librarian will utilize the first six weeks to teach students about the library and library procedures.
16. Teacher/Librarian will use an electronic calendar to schedule check-out times, open times, and instructional times.

Math Instructional Expectations

District Expectations: (Required of all teachers K-12 unless otherwise specified)

1. Teachers will utilize the GISD Math Vertical Alignment document in planning instruction. The following documents provided by TEA will also be used:
Introduction to the Revised Math TEKS: Vertical Alignment Chart (K-Algebra I)
Introduction to the Revised Math TEKS: Side-By-Side Comparison (for each grade level)
2. The Mathematical Process Standards as stated in the TEKS will be integrated into the content TEKS taught at each grade level including: (2014-2015 applies to K-8 only; Applicable to K-12 thereafter)
 - students applying mathematics in real-world examples;

- students using a problem-solving model (A-analyze information, F-formulate a plan, D&J-determine and justify the solution, E-evaluate the process and reasonableness of the solution); and
 - students communicating mathematical ideas - use multiple representations, explain, justify, oral and written communication (e.g. journals, written justifications).
- 3. Students will participate in learning experiences that help them make connections from the concrete to the pictorial to the abstract.
- 4. Students will participate in conceptually-based, hands-on, manipulative-driven math experiences.
- 5. Students will use interactive journals to reflect upon learning experiences which will include analyzing for reasonableness and justifying mathematical ideas and arguments.
- 6. Teachers will review math concepts daily using number corner, problem-of-the-day, bell ringers, warm-ups, etc.
- 7. Math stations will be used to review math concepts and skills. (K – 6)
- 8. Teachers will utilize small group instruction to re-teach or clarify misunderstandings that students have. (K - 6)
- 9. On a rotating basis, teachers will be expected to apply, attend, and participate in the Mathematics Collaborative (grades 6-12) at Region VII for a one-year commitment. Teachers may apply in multiple years with principal approval.

Science Instructional Expectations

District Expectations: (required of all teachers K-12 unless otherwise specified)

- Teachers will use the vertical alignment documents when planning for instruction and assessment.
- Multi-step problems using problem-solving strategies will be addressed weekly at the application level or higher.
- The metric system will be used exclusively for science measurement as appropriate in the TEKS.
- Science journals, lab notebooks, written responses, etc. will be maintained in each science classroom at all grade levels, which will include a safety test, concepts of measurement, problem-solving activities from start to finish, and any other documentation that students have mastered the application of the scientific method.
- Teachers must model scientific processes, critical thinking, and problem solving for all students.

For all activities, students must be able to answer the following questions:

- a. What was I looking for? (hypothesis)
- b. How did I look for it? (process)
- c. What did I find? (results)
- d. What does it mean? (conclusion)

- Teachers and students will use and follow requirements in the Texas Safety Manual. Teachers are required by law to receive the full safety training once. If assignments change, the law states that a safety update is needed. However, it is recommended that science teachers receive safety training **or an update** every three years.
- On a rotating basis, teachers will be expected to apply, attend, and participate in the Science Collaborative (grades 6-10) at Region VII for a one-year commitment. Teachers may apply in multiple years with principal approval.
- Teachers will use technology, such as probes in grades 9-12, to collect data in order to enhance and to complete lab experiences.
- Field experiences that extend beyond a classroom experience will be required to allow students to explore, observe, and investigate things in the natural world that cannot be brought into the classroom environment.
- Laboratory investigations are essential for the effective teaching and learning of science. Teachers will follow the implementation plan for percent of instructional time to conduct field and laboratory investigations:

Grade Level	%	Lab Time	%	Lab Time
K-1	80	Encouraged	40	Required
2-3	60	Encouraged	40	Required
4-5	50	Encouraged	40	Required
6-12	40	Required	40	Required

- Students will be required to demonstrate/communicate their learning through project-based learning activities every three weeks. These projects may be shared through demonstrations, posters, presentations, etc., within the classroom.
- Students will be required to exhibit their top projects throughout the year, one of which may be taken further toward a science fair project that may be entered for the Regional Science Fair competition.

Social Studies Instructional Expectations

District Expectations: (required of all teachers K-12 unless otherwise specified)

- Teachers will use the vertical alignment documents when planning for instruction and assessment.
- Targeted areas will be addressed in each social studies strand to support reading skills as outlined in the TEKS.
 - World History - 29F; 30C
 - U.S. History - 29B; 29H
 - World Geography - 21C; 21A
 - Grade 8 - 29B

- Students will be exposed to current issues at the appropriate grade level, using the appropriate media.
- Student portfolios (journals, notebooks, folders) will be maintained in each social studies classroom at all grade levels.
- Students must be given opportunities to respond in a written format to social studies content weekly as outlined in the TEKS.
 - Government – 21B
 - U.S. History – 30C
 - World History – 30B
 - 8th – 30B
 - 7th – 22B
 - 6th – 22E
 - 5th – 25E
 - 4th – 22E
 - 3rd – 18C
- Social studies and ELA TEKS are expected to be integrated daily at K-4.
- Teachers will conduct field experiences, real or virtual, to support and to provide relevance to culture and history.

Employee Involvement

Policies BQA, BQB

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

Staff Development

Policy DMA

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

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

Compensation and Benefits

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as non-exempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See *Overtime Compensation*, page 26.)

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

Employees should contact the payroll department for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

Paychecks

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

An employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of leave accumulated.

The schedule of pay dates for the 2016-17 school year follows:

August 25, 2016	March 24, 2017
September 23, 2016	April 25, 2017
October 25, 2016	May 25, 2017
November 18, 2016	June 23, 2017
December 16, 2016	July 25, 2017
January 25, 2017	
February 24, 2017	

Paychecks are not mailed during summer months. They may be picked up at the business office during regular business hours.

Automatic Payroll Deposit

Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of one month is necessary to activate this service. Contact the payroll department for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Payroll Deductions

Policy CFEA

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

- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) or Social Security employee contributions
- Federal income tax required for all full-time employees
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986)

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

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.

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

Employees may be compensated for overtime at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 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 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 expenses other than mileage.

Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

Policy CRD

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

- Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
- 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. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact Thomasa Adkins for more information.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact Thomasa Adkins for more information.

Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

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

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

Workers' Compensation Insurance

Policy CRE

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

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

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the 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. See *Workers' Compensation Benefits*, page 36 for information on use of paid leave for such absences.

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 Thomesa Adkins.

Teacher Retirement

Policy DEG

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify Judy Moore as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web (www.trs.texas.gov). See page 13 for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

Leaves and Absences

Policies DEC, DECA, DECB

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

Leave must be used in half day or whole day increments. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state and local leave. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order:

- Local sick leave
- State sick leave accumulated prior to the 1995-1996 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.

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 reproductive services.

Continuation of Health Insurance. Employees on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the district as they were prior to the leave. Otherwise, the district does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave. Under TRS-Active Care rules, an employee is no longer eligible for insurance through the district after six months of unpaid leave other than FML. If an employee’s unpaid leave extends for more than six months, the district will provide the employee with notice of COBRA rights.

Personal Leave

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

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

Discretionary. Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor seven days in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor.

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

State Sick Leave

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

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

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

Local Leave

Five local sick leave days, to be used before state leave, are earned by all District employees. Local sick leave days are defined by the state sick leave rules.

Extended Sick Leave

After all available state and local leave days have been exhausted, a full-time employee shall be granted once during employment with the District a maximum of 30 leave days of extended sick leave to be used only for the employee's own catastrophic illness or injury, including pregnancy-related illness or injury.

To be eligible for extended sick leave, the employee shall have been absent at least 15 consecutive workdays.

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

Extended sick leave shall be taken with no loss in pay.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—General Provisions

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

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:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

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 servicemember during a single 12-month period. A covered servicemember 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 FML, 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 FML, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

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 over 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 employee’s job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

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

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 the FMLA. If they are eligible, 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) requires 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

Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions

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

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

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

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

District Contact. Employees that require FML or have questions should contact Thomesa Adkins for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Temporary Disability Leave

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

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

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

When an employee is ready to return to work, the superintendent should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to resume regular duties. Certified employees returning

from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned if an appropriate position is available. If an appropriate position is not available, the employee may be assigned to another campus, subject to the approval of the campus principal. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, the employee will be reinstated to a position at the original campus at the beginning of the following school year.

Workers' Compensation Benefits

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

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

Assault Leave

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

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

Jury Duty

Employees will receive leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave for jury duty. Employees must present documentation of the service to their supervisor upon return to work and note on the absence from duty form.

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. Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

Military Leave

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

Reemployment after Military Leave. Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. 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 time specified by law to the superintendent's office. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years.

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

Excessive Absences

Importance of Regular Attendance

Every Gilmer ISD employee has an important role in the education of children and the operation of our school district; therefore, consistent and regular attendance is important. Gilmer ISD provides generous leave benefits to employees. However, excessive absences are not acceptable since it has a directly negative impact on the accomplishment of the District's mission.

Reporting Absences

Short absences for situations such as employee illness, illness of an immediate family member, jury duty, or personal business are coordinated through the campus or department. Employees should call their supervisor to report all absences. Employees should enter all absences on the approved Absence from Duty Form and make phone contact with the campus administrator or

department supervisor or director. Failure to report an absence as described above may result in disciplinary action up to and including separation from employment due to job abandonment.

Tracking Absences

Absences will be tracked as defined by the equivalent workday per DEC (LOCAL) within the assigned work calendar which includes the summer period. At the start of each employment year, a new cycle of recording absence occurrences will begin for an employee. A recommendation of termination or contract non-renewal may be issued on an employee's second year-end evaluation pending Human Resources (HR) approval if two (2) consecutive employment years exist of recorded excessive absenteeism. Gilmer ISD defines excessive absenteeism as 10 days or more.

Absences Counting Toward Possible Action

The chart below outlines the following steps to be taken by an employee's immediate supervisor for absence occurrences. Absences *excluded* include those covered within an official Leave of Absence (LOA) as approved by the Employee Benefits Department, an official Workers Compensation as approved by the Risk Management Department, or absences due to jury duty, subpoenaed court appearances, bereavement (immediate family), approved vacation, comp time off, administrative leave/suspension, and UIL or other excused school business.

Memo to Record*:

187 to 190 calendar - 10 days
191 to 199 calendar - 10 ½ days
200 to 208 calendar - 11 days
209 to 217 calendar - 11 ½ days
218+ calendar - 12 days

Additional Occurrences

Refer to HR for consultation. Further disciplinary action may include Counseling, Reprimand/Warning, Suspension (up to 1 day), or Termination.

Employee Recognition and Appreciation

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities.

District Communications

Throughout the school year, the public relations office publishes newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

Complaints and Grievances

Policy DGBA

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

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

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.

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.

Freedom From Retaliation

Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against an employee for bringing a concern or complaint. [See DG]

Notice to Employees

The principal of each campus and other supervisory personnel shall inform employees of this policy.

Specific Complaints

For more information on how to proceed with complaints regarding:

1. Alleged discrimination, including violations of Title IX or Section 504, see DAA.
2. Instructional materials, see EFA.
3. A commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District, see CKE.

Other Review

Complaints alleging certain forms of harassment shall be processed in accordance with DIA. Complaints arising from any of the following must be addressed through the local and statutory processes indicated below:

1. The proposed nonrenewal of a term contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code, in accordance with DFBB.

2. The proposed termination or suspension without pay of an employee on a probationary, term, or continuing contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code during the contract term, in accordance with DFAA, DFBA, or DFCA, respectively.

This policy shall apply to all other employee complaints.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, terms are defined as follows:

Complaint/Grievance: The terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning.

A complaint under this policy may include:

1. Grievances concerning an employee’s wages, hours, or conditions of work;
2. Specific allegations of unlawful discrimination in employment based on the employee’s sex, race, religion, national origin, age, or disability;
3. Specific allegations of unlawful discrimination or retaliation based on the employee’s exercise of legally protected rights; or
4. Specific allegations of adverse personnel action based on the employee’s good faith report to an appropriate law enforcement authority of a violation of a law by the District or a District employee, i.e., “whistleblower complaints.” [See DG]
5. Complaints arising from the dismissal or termination of an at-will employee. [See DCD]
6. Complaints arising from the termination at end of year of the probationary contract of a professional employee. [See DFAB]

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 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 the deadline and received by the employee or designated representative no more than three days after the response deadline.

Days: “Days” shall mean District business days. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day a document is filed is “day zero,” and all deadlines shall be determined by counting the following day as “day one.”

Representative: “Representative” means 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.

Whistleblower Complaints: Whistleblower complaints shall be filed within the time specified by law. Such complaints shall first be filed in accordance with LEVEL TWO, below. 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 days of the initiation of the complaint. [See DG]

General Provisions: 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, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

Cost 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 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 requested information if the re-filing is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

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 forward the complaint form to the appropriate administrator. The appropriate administrator shall hold a conference with the employee within ten days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator shall have ten days following the conference to provide the employee a written response.

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 after receipt of a response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the response deadline at Level One. The Superintendent or designee shall hold a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. At the conference, the Superintendent or designee shall consider only the issues and documents presented at Level One and identified in the Level Two appeal/notice. The Superintendent or designee shall have ten days following the conference to provide the employee a written response.

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 after receipt of a response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the response deadline at Level Two. 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 with copies of the complaint form, all responses, all appeal notices, and all written documentation previously submitted by

the employee or the administration. The Board shall consider only those issues and documents presented at the preceding levels and identified in the appeal notice. 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. 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. If for any reason the Board fails to reach a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

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*, page 71 for additional information.

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

Texas Educators' Code of Ethics

Statement of Purpose

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

Professional Standards

1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 1.13 The educator shall not consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
- (ii) the subject matter of the communication;
- (iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
- (iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;

- (v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
- (vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Policies DH, DIA

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

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

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

Reporting Procedures: An employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to an appropriate person designated below. Any District employee with supervisory authority who receives notice that another employee has or may have experienced prohibited harassment is required to immediately report the alleged acts and take whatever other steps are required by this policy. Any other person who knows or believes that a District employee has experienced harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to the appropriate person designated by this policy.

Timely Reporting: Reports of harassment shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged acts. A failure to promptly report alleged harassment may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the harassment.

A District employee may report harassment to his or her supervisor or campus principal. A person shall not be required to report harassment to the alleged harasser; nothing in this policy prevents a person from reporting harassment directly to one of the District officials below:

District Officials:

1. For sexual harassment, the Title IX coordinator. [See DAA(LOCAL)]
2. For all other prohibited harassment, the Superintendent.

A report against the Title IX coordinator may be made directly to the Superintendent; a report against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board.

Upon receipt of a report of harassment, a supervisor or principal shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed above.

Harassment of Students

Policies DF, DH, FFG, FFH

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. See *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*, page 54 and *Bullying*, page 75 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 included counseling, whether the educator reported the subject of the counseling to the student's guardians or to the appropriate school personnel, or, in the case of alleged abuse or neglect, whether the educator reported the abuse or neglect to the appropriate law enforcement agencies; and
 - g. Any other communications tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with a 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 about 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.

Student Welfare

Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Statement of Non-Discrimination. 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 non-verbal 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:

- 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;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- 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 non-verbal 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.

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 non-verbal 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 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 purpose of this policy, District officials are the Title IX coordinator, the 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 employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:

Name: Rick Albritton
Address: 500 South Trinity, Gilmer, TX 75644
Telephone: (903) 841-7400

Section 504 Coordinator. Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the Section 504 coordinator. The District designated the following employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended:

Name: Dawn Harris
Address: 500 S. Trinity St. Gilmer, TX 75644
Telephone: (903) 841-7400

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 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 the 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 or 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.

Employee-to-Employee. Sexual harassment of a coworker is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct under the following conditions:

- Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions.
- The conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or otherwise offensive work environment.

Employees who believe that they have been sexually harassed by another employee are encouraged to come forward with complaints. The district will promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment and will take prompt appropriate disciplinary action against employees found to have engaged in conduct constituting sexual harassment of other employees. The district's policy outlining the process of filing complaints of sexual harassment is reprinted below:

Reporting Procedures: An employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to an appropriate person designated below. Any District employee with supervisory authority who receives notice that another employee has or may have experienced prohibited harassment is required to immediately report the alleged acts and take whatever other steps are required by this policy. Any other person who knows or believes that a District employee has experienced harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to the appropriate person designated by this policy.

Timely Reporting: Reports of harassment shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged acts. A failure to promptly report alleged harassment may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the harassment.

A District employee may report harassment to his or her supervisor or campus principal. A person shall not be required to report harassment to the alleged harasser; nothing in this policy prevents a person from reporting harassment directly to one of the District officials below:

District Officials:

1. For sexual harassment, the Title IX coordinator. [See DAA(LOCAL)]
2. For all other prohibited harassment, the Superintendent. A report against the Title IX coordinator may be made directly to the Superintendent; a report against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board. Upon receipt of a report of harassment, a supervisor or principal shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed above.

Employee-to-Student. Sexual harassment of students by employees is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. Sexual harassment of students includes any welcome or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other oral, written, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature. Romantic relationships between district employees and students are strictly prohibited. Other prohibited conduct includes the following:

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

In most instances, sexual abuse of a student by an employee violates the student's constitutional right to bodily integrity. Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to, fondling, sexual assault, or sexual intercourse.

Employees who suspect a student is being sexually harassed or abused by another employee are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal. All allegations of sexual harassment or sexual abuse of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. Conduct that may be characterized as known or suspected child abuse also will be reported to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. Employees with questions or concerns relating to the alleged sexual harassment of a student should contact their principal or the Superintendent.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Policies DF, DG, DH, FFG, GRA

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect 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. Abuse is defined by SBEC and includes the following acts or omissions:

- Mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material

- impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Physical injury that results in substantial harm to a student or minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the student or minor, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline; or
 - Sexual conduct harmful to a student's or minor's mental, emotional, or physical welfare.

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

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

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

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics.

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

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

Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed in the district improvement plan. As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse

or neglect. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

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 networks, and all district-owned devices used on or off school property, are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

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

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

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

Personal Use of Electronic Media

Policy DH

Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), web logs (blogs), wikis, electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites

(e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.

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

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

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment.
- The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, meal times, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct district business.
- The employee shall not use the district's logo or other copyrighted material of the district without express, written consent.
- An employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on district business unless the employee first obtains written approval from the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy concerns.

- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:
 - Confidentiality of student records [See Policy FL]
 - Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]
 - Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses. [See Policy GBA]
 - Copyright law [See Policy CY]
 - Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]

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

Use of Electronic Media with Students

Policy DH

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The employee may use any form of electronic media **except** text messaging. Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility. An employee who communicates with a student using text messaging shall comply with the following protocol:
 - The employee shall include 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 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics including:
 - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
 - Copyright law [Policy CY]
- Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DF]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with one or more currently-enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.

Criminal History Background Checks

Policy DBAA

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

Employee Arrests and Convictions

Policy DH

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

- Crimes involving school property or funds
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator

- Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity
- Crimes involving moral turpitude

Moral turpitude includes the following:

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

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

Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention

Policies DH, DI

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

Alcohol and drugs

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

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

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

DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS

The District prohibits the unlawful distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs, inhalants, and alcohol on school premises or as part of any of the District's activities. Employees who violate this prohibition

shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Such sanctions may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation programs or employee assistance programs, termination from employment with the District, and referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution. [See policies at DH and DHE]

41 U.S.C. 702(a)(1)(A); 28 TAC 169.2

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

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

Tobacco Products and E-Cigarette Use

Policies DH, FNCD GKA

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

Fraud and Financial Impropriety

Policy CAA

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

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

Conflict of Interest

Policy CB, DBD

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

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

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

Associations and Political Activities

Policy DGA

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

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

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

Charitable Contributions

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 fund raiser or attending a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions.

Safety

Policy CK series

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students and to protect and conserve district equipment, employees must comply with the following requirements:

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact Bobby Rice.

Possession of Firearms and Weapons

Policies FNCG, GKA

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisor or call Greg Watson immediately.

Visitors in the Workplace

Policy GKC

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

Asbestos Management Plan

Policy CKA

The district is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each school. A copy of the

district's management plan is kept in the maintenance office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

Pest Control Treatment

Policies CLB, DI

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

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

Employee Dress

Employees are role models not only in their actions but also in their dress which affects school climate and atmosphere. The manner and dress of employees shall at all times be professional and appropriate to the activity of the moment and shall be such as to maintain dignity and respect from students and the community. Modesty should govern all decisions for professional attire.

The professional dress and grooming of District employees shall be clean, neat, and in a manner appropriate for their assignments. All administrative staff is expected to dress in a professional manner. Male administrative staff is encouraged to wear shirts and ties.

Appropriate dress is as follows:

For female employees:

- Dresses,
- Skirts,
- Slacks,
- Suits (including suits with skirts, pants, or tailored, dress capris)
- Blouses and tops, and
- Shoes

For male employees:

- Suits,
- Sport coats or blazers,
- Dress slacks,
- Khaki slacks,
- Dress shirt and tie,

- Collared shirts, and
- Shoes and socks.
- Hair shall be clean, neatly trimmed and well-groomed.
- Beards and mustaches shall be allowed if they are neatly trimmed.

For all employees:

- Jeans (not distressed with holes or tears) may be worn only on days designated by the principal or supervisor, designated spirit days, and teacher in-service days. Exceptions may be granted by the principal for special activities, ie. field days or field trips where dress clothing would not be necessary.

Examples of inappropriate dress:

- Plunging necklines, exposed midriffs, enlarged armholes, halters, tank tops, see-through garments and extremely tight fitting attire are unacceptable.
- Clothing with symbols, phrases, or inappropriate slogans is unacceptable.
- No hats, caps or other head coverings shall be worn inside the building (except for religious purposes).
- Clothing that reveals undergarments shall not be worn
- Hemlines for skirts and dresses should be long enough not to be distracting
- Shorts, leggings, warm-ups, spandex or similar tight pants, exercise clothes, or any garment that may appear to be an undergarment are unacceptable.
- Footwear shall exclude thong-type foam or sponge-type flip flops, croc-type shoes and slippers.
- If shirttails are made to be worn tucked in, they must be tucked in. If shirttails are worn in, and pants are designed to be worn with a belt, a belt or suspenders should be worn.
- Jewelry shall not be worn in a visible pierced area other than the ear.

The following exceptions apply to these guidelines:

- Physical education/Athletic Staff/Band staff may choose to wear appropriate attire, approved by the administration, during the instructional period. Athletic/band personnel must change clothes to professional instructional attire before entering any district building or classroom, or may wear appropriate warm-ups over athletic apparel in any district building or classroom.
- Instructors in shop courses may wear aprons, smocks, or overalls during the instructional period.
- Auxiliary employees in maintenance, custodial, transportation, food service, and positions requiring uniforms are exempted from the general guidelines, but shall comply with dress and grooming guidelines specified by their supervisors in the handbooks for those positions.
- Exceptions to these general guidelines are to be made as necessary to allow staff to observe religious customs or beliefs and as necessary to accommodate medical needs.
- Ag teachers may choose to wear appropriate attire based on the necessary activity, approved by the administration, during the agriculture instructional period.
- Scrubs will be allowed for medical personnel only.

General Procedures

Bad Weather Closing

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

Television: KLTV – Channel 7, Tyler
 KETK – Channel 56, Tyler

Radio:
 KYKX – 105.7 FM
 KNUE – 101.5 FM
 KFRO – 95.3 FM
 Or – 1370 AM

Emergencies

Policies CKC, CKD

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

Purchasing Procedures

Policy CH

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the business department on an official district purchase order (PO) form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without a PO number. The district will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district's business office. Contact Beverly Bobo 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 business office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. The form to process a change in personal information can be obtained from the campus office.

Personnel Records

Policy DBA, GBA

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

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

The choice to not allow public access to this information may be made at any time by submitting a written request to the superintendent'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.

Building Use

Policies DGA, GKD

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The campus principal is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact Judy Moore 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 principal or superintendent. Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the superintendent or the board of trustees. Resignation without consent may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the acts listed in *Reports to the Texas Education Agency* on page 71.

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

Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

Policies DFAA, DFAB, DFBA, DFBB, DFD, DFF, DFFA, DFFB, DFFC

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

Dismissal of Noncontract Employees

Policy DCD

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain

protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See *Complaints and Grievances*, page 40.)

Exit Interviews and Procedures

Policies DC and CY

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

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

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

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

Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

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

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

Student Issues

Equal Educational Opportunities

Policies FB, FFH

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

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

Student Records

Policy FL

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

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

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the 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 teacher or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved to their satisfaction should be directed to the campus principal. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with a principal's response.

Administering Medication to Students

Policy FFAC

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

Dietary Supplements

Policies DH, FFAC

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

Psychotropic Drugs

Policy FFAC

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

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

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

Student Conduct and Discipline

Policies in the FN series and FO series

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

Student Attendance

Policy FEB

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

Bullying

Policy FFI

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

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

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
- 2.) 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, 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. 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.

Notice to 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 reasonable 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.

Hazing

Policy FNCC

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

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