



**Bastrop ISD**  
**2022–2023**  
**Employee Handbook**

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of a disability, please  
email: [Diana Greene dgreene@bisdtx.org](mailto:Diana.Greene@bisdtx.org)

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# Employee Handbook Acknowledgement

I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

You may access the BISD Handbook on the District website under the Human Resources Department tab.

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

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

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

# 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 Associate Superintendent of Administrative Services and Human Resources.

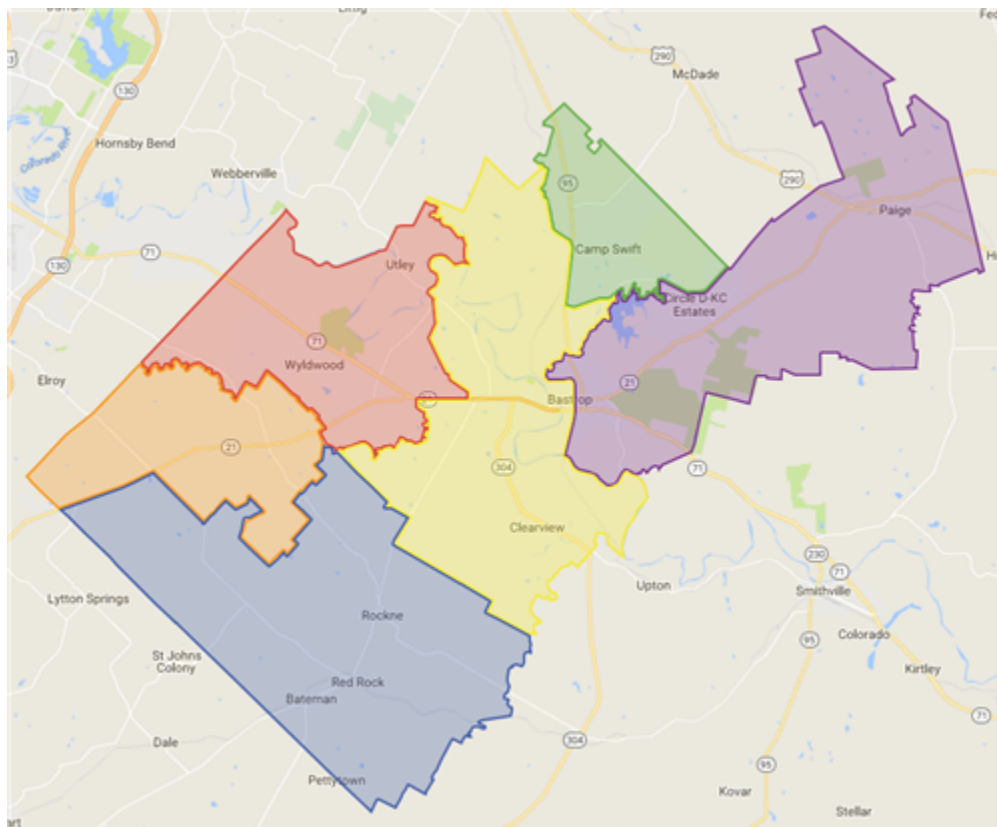
This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. Nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of non contract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to employment. These policies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

# District Information

## Description of the District

The Bastrop Independent School District is located approximately 30 miles southeast of Austin in the beautiful Lost Pines of Central Texas. The district boundary covers an area of 450 square miles and includes the communities of Bastrop, Cedar Creek, Paige, Red Rock, Rockne, and vast rural areas of Bastrop County.

## District Map





# Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

## Policy AE

### Mission

The mission of the Bastrop Independent School District is to develop and educate every student so they can make a positive impact on their families, the workforce, and the greater community.

### Vision

Our vision is that every student graduates prepared for life's challenges and ready for tomorrow's opportunities.

### Motto

Their future is our focus.

### Core Values

- ★ School is a place of belonging, dignity, and mutual respect.
- ★ Learning experiences that encourage students to be creators and producers will prepare them to reach their full potential.
- ★ Emotional intelligence and practical work skills are as important as academic knowledge.
- ★ Analyzing information and thinking critically should be part of the daily life of students and staff.
- ★ Strong relationships between families, educators, businesses, and non-profit agencies will ensure our students and our community thrive.

### Strategic Priorities

<b>Student Success and Well-Being</b>	<b>Teaching and Learning Practices</b>	<b>Organization Culture</b>	<b>Collaborative Partnership</b>
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### Student Success and Well-Being

- ★ BISD will address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students through high-quality Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).
- ★ BISD will identify work/life skills most important for students to know and create a framework for implementing them.
- ★ BISD will develop systems and structures that value student ownership of their academic and behavioral success.

## Teaching and Learning Practices

- ★ BISD will develop and implement comprehensive teaching and learning practices to advance the academic achievement of every student.
- ★ BISD will promote a collaborative and adaptable learning environment that gives students opportunities to excel and take risks with their learning.
- ★ BISD will enhance professional learning with opportunities for teachers to visit/observe model classrooms that successfully blend the teaching of academic content, practical work skills, and critical thinking.

## Organizational Culture

- ★ BISD will provide a welcoming environment that embraces mutual respect and care and prioritizes healthy relationships with students, families, and colleagues.
- ★ BISD will strengthen disciplinary practices and safety protocols to ensure safe, respectful, and responsible schools.
- ★ BISD will enhance its onboarding experience to prepare every new employee for success in BISD.

## Collaborative Partnerships

- ★ BISD will expand family/community engagement and parent education activities to support and accelerate student outcomes.
- ★ BISD will create multiple pathways for students to acquire communication and interpersonal skills through positive interaction and networking within the business community.
- ★ BISD will strengthen external partnerships to help students attain industry certifications, work experience, and/or sponsorship opportunities.

## Character Education

An educational goal of the Bastrop Independent School District is to prepare students to become productive members of a democratic society. We believe that our democracy is based on the assumption that the following character traits are accepted values, and that all individuals can demonstrate personal and social accountability. Therefore, the following character traits, according to BISD Board policy EHBK (Legal) and EHBK (Local), are modeled by district personnel, and integrated into the curriculum across all grade levels and subjects. Further, BISD will encourage participation of families, businesses, and churches in this effort. (Adopted by BISD Board of Trustees, August 16, 2005).

### **AUGUST**

#### **Respect:**

Through your language and actions, exhibit consideration and courtesy to others in all your activities and situations.

**SEPTEMBER****Honesty:**

Through a variety of activities, students will demonstrate trustworthiness, fairness and straightforwardness of conduct in their own character development and interpersonal relationships.

**OCTOBER****Responsibility:**

Students will exhibit moral, legal, and mental accountability for their choices, regardless of pressures to do otherwise.

**NOVEMBER****Compassion:**

Students will demonstrate empathy and respect for others in school, life, and career settings, accepting the right of all people to be treated with courtesy and dignity.

**DECEMBER****Perseverance:**

Students will acknowledge the importance of persistence while encountering negative influences, forms of opposition, or discouragement.

**JANUARY****Loyalty:**

Students will recognize the need to establish personal and career relationships and select causes based on positive ethical principles for which they can remain true.

**FEBRUARY****Justice:**

Students will exhibit fair and equitable behavior, which is consistent with the laws and principles that govern a democratic society.

**MARCH****Self-Reliance:**

Students will believe in their own self-worth and learn to rely on their strengths. Students will also demonstrate knowledge of their skills, abilities, and impression on others.

**APRIL**

**Self-Discipline:**

Through activities, students will demonstrate positive patterns of behavior and the strength of mental and moral courage to accomplish tasks, manage time, and relate effectively with others.

**MAY**

**Integrity:**

Students will understand the importance of adherence to a code of conduct necessary for successful performances in the workplace and in their personal lives.

**JUNE**

**Honor:**

Demonstrating adherence to principles considered right, acting with integrity as you respect yourself and others.

**JULY**

**Patriotism**

Honor and support the United States of America, and, by your words and actions, encourage others to do the same.

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

Current Board members include

- Billy Moore, President
- Chris Dillon, Vice-President
- Kellye Seekatz, Secretary
- Molly McClure, Trustee
- Matthew Mix, Trustee
- Ashley Mutschink, Trustee
- Rick Rivera, Trustee

The Board usually meets the third Tuesday of every month at 5:30 PM. The meetings are held at the Jerry Fay Wilhelm Performing Arts Center. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and at the Bastrop ISD Service Center 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 one-hour notice. (Texas Government Code, Section 551.045)

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 sessions 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

### Regular Meetings for the 2022-2023 School Year:

Tuesday, August 16, 2022	Tuesday, February 21, 2023
Tuesday, September 20, 2022	Tuesday, March 21, 2023
Tuesday, October 18, 2022	Tuesday, April 18, 2023
Tuesday, November 15, 2022	Tuesday, May 16, 2023
Tuesday, December 13, 2022 *	Tuesday, June 20, 2023
Tuesday, January 17, 2023	Tuesday, July 18, 2023

## Administration

<b>Administrator</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>
Barry Edwards	Superintendent	(512) 772-7125
Dr. Kristi Lee	Deputy Superintendent	(512) 772-7106
Penné Liefer	Associate Superintendent for Administrative Services & Human Resources	(512) 772-7108
Dr. Matt Warford	Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	(512) 772-7115
Dina Edgar	Chief Financial Officer	(512) 772-7105
Scot Bunch	Chief of Police and Director of Safety & Security	(512) 772-7107

# School Calendar



Approved 1.18.2022

## 2022-2023 Academic Calendar

JULY 2022						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
					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						

AUGUST 2022						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
	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 2022						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
				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	

OCTOBER 2022						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
						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					

NOVEMBER 2022						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
		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			

DECEMBER 2022						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
				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

- Staff Development/Student Holiday
- Staff & Student Holiday
- State Testing
- ★ Flex Professional Learning
- [ ] 6 Weeks Grade Reporting (grades 5-12)
- { } 9 Weeks Grade Reporting (grades PK-4)
- \*\* Bad Weather Day
- Early Release  
Elementary 11:15am/Intermediate & Middle 12:15pm/High 12:25pm

- JULY**  
4 Independence Day/  
Staff & Student Holiday
- AUGUST**  
8-12 Staff Development  
15-16 Staff Development  
17 First Day of School
- SEPTEMBER**  
2 Staff Development/  
Student Holiday  
5 Staff & Student Holiday  
(Liber Day)
- OCTOBER**  
7 Staff Development/  
Student Holiday  
10 Staff & Student Holiday  
(Columbus Day)
- NOVEMBER**  
1 Staff Development/  
Student Holiday  
21-22 Flex Professional Learning  
21-25 Thanksgiving Break
- DECEMBER**  
6-9 State Testing  
16 Early Release  
19-30 Winter Break
- JANUARY**  
2 Staff & Student Holiday  
3-4 Staff Development/Student Holiday  
16 Staff & Student Holiday (MLK Jr. Day)
- FEBRUARY**  
10 Staff Development/Student Holiday  
13 Staff Development/Student Holiday/  
Bad Weather Day
- MARCH**  
13-17 Spring Break
- APRIL**  
4-6 State Testing  
7 Staff & Student Holiday/  
Bad Weather Day  
10 Staff Development/Student Holiday
- MAY**  
2-5 State Testing  
9-12 State Testing  
16-19 State Testing  
25 Early Release  
26 Staff Development/Student Holiday  
29 Staff & Student Holiday (Memorial Day)
- JUNE**  
20-23 State Testing
- GRADUATION**  
GHS - May 25, 2023 (AM)  
CCHS - May 25, 2023 (PM)  
CRCA - May 26, 2023 (AM)  
BHS - May 26, 2023 (PM)

JANUARY 2023						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
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				

FEBRUARY 2023						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
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25	26	27	28			

MARCH 2023						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	{20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

APRIL 2023						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
						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						

MAY 2023						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
	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			

JUNE 2023						
SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
				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	



bisdtx.org

Bastrop Independent School District  
906 Farm Street  
Bastrop, TX 78602  
p: 512.772.7100  
f: 512.321.1371

## Helpful Contacts

Heather Christie	Director of Accountability & Curriculum	(512) 772-7138
Eliot Allen	Director of Athletics & Administrative Services	(512) 772-7152
Patricia Flores	Director of Bilingual/ESL	(512) 772-7158
Stacey Widdecombe	Director of Child Nutrition	(512) 772-7153
Amanda Brantley	Director of College, Career & Military Readiness	(512) 772-7114
VACANT	Director of Digital Learning & STEM CTE	(512) 772-7200
Jennifer Eberly	Director of Early Literacy	(512) 772-7103
Kendra Monk	Director of Federal & State Programs and School Improvement	(512) 772-7158
Luis "Chico" Portillo	Director of Fine Arts	(512) 772-7111
Bill Hansen	Director of Operations	(512) 772-7260
Christopher Tawater	Director of PEIMS & Data Quality	(512) 772-7167
VACANT	Director of Special Services and Programs	(512) 772-7835
Laura Baker	Director of Student Services	(512) 772-7147
Patricia Zimmerman	Director of Transportation	(512) 321-2636

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 above.



## School Directory

### **Bluebonnet Elementary School (PreK-4)**

Laura Faircloth, Principal  
416 FM 1209  
Bastrop, Texas 78602  
512-772-7680

### **Emile Elementary School (PreK-4)**

Windy Burnett, Principal  
601 MLK Jr. Drive  
Bastrop, Texas 78602  
512-772-7620

### **Mina Elementary School (PreK-4)**

Emily Allen, Principal  
1203 Hill Street  
Bastrop, Texas 78602  
512-772-7640

### **Bastrop Intermediate School (5-6)**

Kristi Kisamore, Principal  
509 Old Austin Highway  
Bastrop, Texas 78602  
512-772-7450

### **Bastrop Middle School (7-8)**

Ladyanne Horne, Principal  
709 Old Austin Highway  
Bastrop, Texas 78602  
512-772-7400

### **Bastrop High School (9-12)**

Krystal Gabriel, Principal  
1614 Chambers Street  
Bastrop, Texas 78602  
512-772-7400

### **Cedar Creek Elementary School (PreK-4)**

Kelli Ruby, Principal  
5582 FM 535  
Cedar Creek, Texas 78612  
512-772-7600

### **Lost Pines Elementary School (PreK-4)**

Lezlie Ringstaff, Principal  
151 Tiger Woods Drive  
Bastrop, Texas 78602  
512-772-7700

### **Red Rock Elementary School (PreK-4)**

Kelly Hubley, Principal  
2401 FM 20  
Red Rock, Texas 78662  
512-772-7660

### **Cedar Creek Intermediate (5-6)**

Alison Hall, Principal  
151 Voss Parkway  
Cedar Creek, Texas 78612  
512-772-7475

### **Cedar Creek Middle School (7-8)**

Daniel Brown, Principal  
125 Voss Pkwy  
Cedar Creek, TX 78612  
512-772-7425

### **Cedar Creek High School (9-12)**

Bridgette Cornelius, Principal  
793 Union Chapel Road  
Cedar Creek, Texas 78612  
512-772-7300

**Genesis High School (9-12)**

Martin Conrardy, Principal  
1200 Cedar Street  
Bastrop, Texas 78602  
512-772-7230

**Colorado River Collegiate Academy (9-12)**

Martin Conrardy, Principal  
1200 Cedar Street  
Bastrop, Texas 78602  
512-772-7230

**Gateway School (6-12)**

Zach Allison, Principal  
1019 Lovers Lane  
Bastrop, Texas 78602  
512-772-7820

# Employment

## Equal Employment Opportunity

*Policies DAA, DIA*

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Bastrop ISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), 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.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not discriminate on the basis of sex and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the district's Title IX coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the Title IX coordinator for employees to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment: Diana Greene, Human Resources Coordinator, 906 Farm Street, [dgreene@bisdtx.org](mailto:dgreene@bisdtx.org), 512-772-7100. Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, email, or phone. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator for employees for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: Diana Greene, Human Resources Coordinator, 906 Farm Street, [dgreene@bisdtx.org](mailto:dgreene@bisdtx.org), 512-772-7100.

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

## **Contract and Non Contract 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 two school years per the flexibility outlined in the board approved District of Innovation Plan..

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

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

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

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

**Temporary Workers.** Temporary workers require fingerprinting and background checks prior to working with the district. All district staff who contract with temporary workers to perform extra duties, tutoring, auxiliary services, etc. must have the temporary worker complete a standard application with the school district. The temporary worker cannot begin work until they have completed the hiring processes through Human Resources.

### **Guidelines for Paying District Employees for Additional Duties or Contracted Workers (Notice of Assignments)**

If the person is currently an employee and will be performing duties outside of their district contract:

1. Sponsor will complete a Notice of Assignment (NOA) form well in advance of start of work (make sure that the NOA lists duties, dates to be worked, and agreed pay). Give completed NOA to campus bookkeeper for Principal approval. For Fine Arts, forward to the Fine Arts Director for their approval.
2. The NOA should be sent to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at the Service Center for Finance approval. The approved NOA will be returned to the campus bookkeeper for processing.
3. Once the approved NOA is received, have the employee complete an electronic timesheet by clocking in and out for their work.
4. Return original NOA, with all signatures, to the CFO.

If the person is not currently an employee but will be working alone with students.

1. Purchase Orders are preferred to pay individuals through Accounts Payable if they are not an employee and will not work alone with students.
2. In the event a Purchase Order is insufficient, the sponsor will complete a Notice of Assignment (NOA) well in advance of start of work (make sure that the NOA lists duties, dates to be worked, and agreed pay). Give completed NOA to campus bookkeeper for Principal approval. For Fine Arts, forward to the Fine Arts Director for their approval.
3. Send completed NOA to the Employee Specialist in Human Resources to determine whether a background check is needed or if using Raptor will suffice.
  - a. If it is determined that the person should be set up as a temp worker and paid through Payroll, then Human Resources will request a background check and ask the individual to complete new employee paperwork.

- i. Once the background check and Human Resources paperwork are complete, and the NOA has been approved, only then can the individual work. They will need to complete timesheets in order to be paid.
- b. If it is determined that the person will work only one event and can be paid through Accounts Payable – once the NOA is approved, enter a PO and attach a copy of their NOA when sending to Accounts Payable for payment. Only after the NOA has been approved can work begin.
- c. Return NOA, with all signatures, to the CFO. The Finance Department will return the approved NOA to the campus.

Note: Athletic officials are not considered employees, therefore they will still be paid through Accounts Payable for tournaments and a third-party vendor (Arbiter Pay) for all regular athletic events.

Include the following when completing a Notice of Assignment:

1. Name of person working
2. Description of work to be done
3. Campus and Group (Band, Cheer, etc.)
4. Amount to be paid – total or hourly rate (any mileage reimbursement should be included in amount)
5. Dates to be worked
6. Signature lines for the following:
  - a. Person doing the work
  - b. Sponsor / Coach / Band Director, etc.
  - c. Principal
  - d. Fine Arts Director (if applicable)
  - e. Chief Financial Officer
  - f. Information on worker:
    - i. Name
    - ii. Address
    - iii. Social Security Number

## **Certification and Licenses**

*Policies DBA, DF*

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

A certified employee's contract may be voided without Chapter 21 due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact Human Resources if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

## **Recertification of Employment Authorization**

*Policy DC*

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

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

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

*Policy CQ, DHE*

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

lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work sites or used in district business.

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

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug testing policies and related educational material should contact the Associate Superintendent of Administrative Services and Human Resources.

## **Health Safety Training**

*Policies DBA, DMA*

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to the campus athletic secretary by August 12, 2022.

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



## Reassignments and Transfers

### *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 by applying for a job posting on the district's TalentEd system. It is no longer necessary to submit a written request for a transfer. It is the employee's responsibility to inform their supervisor of their desire to apply and transfer to another campus or department within the district. Professional courtesy dictates that it is the responsibility of the interviewing principal to notify the home principal of their intent to interview and possibly hire an existing employee.

A teacher applying for a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must apply for the job opening by the deadline set by Human Resources. Requests for a transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found.

## Workload and Work Schedules

### *Policies DEAB, DK, DL*

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

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

**Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees.** Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on

an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. See Overtime Compensation on page 30 for additional information.

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

*Policies DEAB, DG*

The district supports the practice of expressing breast milk and makes reasonable accommodations for the needs of employees who express breast milk. A place, other than a multiple user bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion 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. This notice is not required if parental notice under ESSA is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call the Human Resources Department, 512-772-7100.

## **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.

Upon receiving a report, a nursing review committee may review a nurse's nursing services, qualifications, and quality of patient care, as well as the merits of a complaint concerning a nurse, and make a determination or recommendation regarding a complaint. A nurse may request, orally or in writing, a determination by the committee regarding conduct requested of the nurse believed to violate the nurse's duty to a patient.

## **Employee Involvement**

*Policies BQA, BQB*

At both the campus and district levels, Bastrop 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 related to achieving campus performance objectives, addressed in the campus improvement plan, and approved by a campus-level advisory committee. Staff development for non-instructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g., bus drivers, etc.) and continued employee skill development.

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

Each year ALL staff members must complete professional development modules required by State/Federal laws and funding requirements. To facilitate completion of these requirements,

the district has migrated the training documents to Vector Solutions, so that the materials can be accessed at the employee's convenience. The employee is required to provide an electronic signature upon completion of each module. Employees should complete the modules by August 31, 2022 or within 30 days of hire for mid-year hires.

The District will notify personnel of staff development opportunities throughout the school year for instructional staff.

**The Vector Solutions training modules include, but are not limited to:**

Active Shooter	FERPA <b>(New Hires ONLY)</b>
Blood Borne Pathogens	Human Trafficking
Bullying: Student on Student	Student Mental Health
Child Abuse	Title IX
DIA(LOCAL)	Youth Suicide Awareness <b>(New Hires ONLY)</b>
**Discrimination, Harassment, & Retaliation	

**Additional Trainings (campus faculty meetings):**

Dating Violence	Seizure Training
Health Emergencies	

# Compensation and Benefits

## Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

*Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB*

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district’s pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See *Overtime Compensation*, page 30)

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 supplemental duties may be eligible for stipends in addition to their salary. Contract employees may also receive additional pay at an agreed upon hourly rate for extracurricular duties according to the district's pay schedule. Employees should contact the Human Resources Department for more information about their compensation. Employees should contact their Payroll Specialist in the Business & Finance Department regarding the district’s pay schedules or their semi-monthly paychecks.

## Paychecks

All professional, salaried, and hourly employees are paid semi-monthly. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee’s written authorization.

The schedule of pay dates for the 2022-2023 school year follows:

07/14/22	10/14/22	01/13/23	04/14/23
07/27/22	10/28/22	01/30/23	04/27/23
08/15/22	11/15/22	02/15/23	05/15/23
08/30/22	11/29/22	02/27/23	05/30/23
09/15/22	12/15/22	03/10/23	06/15/23
09/29/22	12/16/22	03/30/23	06/28/23

## **Automatic Payroll Deposit**

Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of 18 days is necessary to activate this service. Contact the Business & Finance 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, based on W-4 selections
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986)
- Child support and spousal maintenance, if applicable
- Delinquent federal education loan payments, if applicable
- Other court ordered wage garnishments, if applicable

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

## **Bastrop ISD**

### **Wage Deduction Authorization Agreement**

I understand and agree that my employer, Bastrop Independent School District (the District), may deduct money from my pay from time to time for reasons that fall into the following categories:

1. My share of the premiums for supplemental benefits for which I have voluntarily enrolled such as: group medical, life insurance, dental plan, disability plan, or any other supplemental benefit product;
2. Contributions that I am required to pay into a retirement or pension plan (Teacher Retirement System);

3. Reimbursements to the District such as (as applicable): non-business use of the District's charge account or credit card; sales and occupancy taxes that were charged to the District in error; or other non-authorized or non-allowable expenditure of District funds;
4. Overpayment of wages for any reason, repayment to the District of such overpayments (the deduction for such a repayment will equal the entire amount of the overpayment, unless the District and I agree in writing to a series of smaller deductions in specified amounts);
5. The cost of repairing or replacing any District supplies, materials, equipment, money, District issued uniforms, or other property that I may damage (other than normal wear and tear), lose, fail to return, or take without appropriate authorization from the District during my employment (except in the case of misappropriation of money by me, I understand that no such deduction will take my pay below minimum wage, or, if I am a salaried exempt employee, reduce my salary below its predetermined amount);
6. Administrative fees in connection with court-ordered garnishments or legally-required wage attachments of my pay, limited in extent to the amount or amounts allowed under applicable laws;
7. The actual value of district-advanced leaves that I have taken in excess of what has been accrued or earned up to the separation date; and
8. Any other deductions that I have elected in writing and submitted to the payroll department.

By electronically signing this Employee Handbook, I agree that the District may deduct money from my pay under the above circumstances, or if any of the above situations occur.

## **Overtime Compensation**

*Policies DEAB, DEC*

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

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

Employees are entitled to a 30-minute duty free lunch period every day. Employees are not permitted to work through a designated lunch period in order to earn comp time or makeup time missed from work.

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.

Employees may be compensated for overtime (i.e., hours beyond 40 in a workweek) at a 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 30 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 is required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

## **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

### *Policy DEE*

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

More information about reimbursable expenses can be found in the Business & Finance Department Manual.

## **Health Insurance**

### *Policy CRD*

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



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

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

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each year or when they experience a qualifying event (e.g., marriage, divorce, birth). Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact the Benefits and Leaves Manager at (512) 772-7100 for more information.

## **Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

### *Policy CRD*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for life, disability, vision, dental, cancer, hospital indemnity, intensive care, accidental, and sickness insurance. Employees can make changes to their insurance coverage during the designated open enrollment period. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Benefits and Leave Manager at (512) 772-7100 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 the Texas Association of School Boards, effective July 1, 2014.

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 employee's supervisor and the Benefits and Leaves Manager. 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 48, 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 the Human Resources Department.

## **Teacher Retirement**

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS and have contacted TRS to start the process, should notify the BISD District Accountant at 512-772-7239 as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web ([www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov)). See page 32 for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

## **Other Benefit Programs**

### **Insurance Deferred Compensation**

Any District provisions regarding insurance programs and/or deferred compensation programs are found in policies CRD (LOCAL) and CRG (LOCAL), respectively.

### **Tuition-Free Attendance**

Children of nonresident full-time employees may attend District schools tuition-free. Contact the Department of Student Services for more information and the appropriate paperwork.

### **Universal Availability of 403(b) Tax Sheltered TSA Plan**

A 403(b) plan, also known as a tax-sheltered annuity (TSA) plan, is a retirement plan for employees of public schools. School districts must provide payroll deductions for any 403(b) plan that an employee wants as long as that product is approved by the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and agrees to follow District requirements. Bastrop ISD does not endorse any one company.

Availability of Plan – Our plan offers “Universal Availability” – which means any employee of Bastrop ISD can participate in our 403(b) Plan.

### **403(b) Annuity Program**

*In accordance with BISSD Policy GKDA (Legal), the District does not endorse the solicitation of any tax deferred or other benefit plan on any campus/department.*

### **It's never too early or too late to start investing towards your retirement!**

Bastrop Independent School District offers employees the opportunity to participate in a "before tax" retirement savings plan.

The Bastrop Independent School District has chosen to have the 403(b) Plan administered through the Region 10 Retirement Asset Management Services (RAMS)\* program.

The Region 10 RAMS 403(b) Administration Services are offered to public school districts and other education agencies in Texas.

BISSD's Administrator is TCG Administrators. TCG is the third party administrator contracted through Region 10 to provide this service. Contact TCG Resources Partners at 1-800-943-9179 or [www.region10rams.org/contact](http://www.region10rams.org/contact)

## HOW TO GET STARTED

Vendors who (a) are on the approved list of 403(b) vendors' products published by the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and (b) agree to follow BISD'S 403(b) plan rules and meet the administrative requirements necessary to keep the plan in compliance with federal and state laws will be available in the plan.

All 403(b) agreements are done online at <http://www.region10rams.org/contact>

Choose both a vendor and a product when you set up a payroll deduction.

Use the website to view your account balance with participating vendors in the plan.

You are required to request distributions and loans through <http://www.region10rams.org/>.

TCG is completely independent of the investments and vendors offered in the plan and TCG will not sell 403(b) products to employees.

### *BISD Approved Vendor List for 403 (b) Providers*

Vender Name
403b ASP (ASPIre Financial Services)**
AIG Retirement Services (formerly VALIC)**
American Century Investments**
American United Life Ins. Co. (only for plans established prior to 2007)
Americo
Annuity Investors Life Insurance (only for participants contributing prior to 8/1/2020)**
Athene (formerly AViva, and only for participants contributing prior to 1/1/2008)
Brighthouse Life Insurance Company
C M Life (subsidiary of Mass Mutual)
CLS Investments, LLC**
Columbia Management Investment Distributors, Inc. (accounts available through Ameriprise)
Commonwealth Annuity
Equitable (formerly AXA Equitable Life Insurance Company)**
FAM Funds (only for participants contributing prior to 5/22/2014)
Federated Funds** (new accounts available through ASPIre Financial)
Fidelity Security Life
FinPath 403(b) Plan
First Investors Funds distributed by Foresters Financial **
Franklin Templeton

All contributions are deducted from your paycheck before income taxes are withheld. For the tax year in which you contribute, your income may fall in a lower tax bracket, resulting in lower taxes paid to the IRS. Contributions grow tax-free and any earnings are also tax deferred until they are withdrawn. You will usually be in a lower tax bracket at retirement, when you can begin distribution.

- You can contribute up to the 2022 yearly maximum of \$20,500.
- There are other contributions available under special circumstances.
- Catch-Up > 50 Provision allows you to contribute an additional \$6,500 if you are over the age of 50.

*Hardship Withdrawals and Loans –*

Effective 6/16/2009 the District's plan, as approved by the Board of Directors, allows hardship withdrawals or loans.

Please contact the TCG Administrators, 1-800-943-9179, for questions regarding the enrollment of a 403(b) plan through Bastrop ISD.

# Leaves and Absences

*Policies DEC, DECA, DECB*

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

Leave is available for the employee's use at the beginning of the work year. If an employee leaves the district prior to the end of the school/work year, the cost of any unearned leave days taken shall be deducted from the employee's final check.

Paid leave must be used in hourly and/or daily increments, respectively. 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:

- Compensatory Leave (for hourly employees)
- Local sick leave
- State sick leave accumulated before the 1995-1996 school year
- State personal leave

Employees must follow district, department, or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate form or certification. Any unapproved absences or absences beyond accumulated or available paid leave shall result in deduction from the employee's pay.

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

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

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

**Medical Certification.** Any employee, who is absent more than three 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 district may require medical certification due to an employee’s questionable pattern of absences or when deemed necessary by the supervisor or superintendent. The district may also request medical certification when an employee requests FMLA leave for the employee’s serious health condition, a serious health condition of the employee’s spouse, parent, or child, or for military caregiver leave.

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 three 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.

Discretionary use of state personal leave shall not exceed more than three consecutive work days. Any extenuating circumstances must be submitted and approved by the Superintendent or designee.

**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. Personal leave will be earned at a rate of one-half day for each 18 workdays per school year not to exceed the five days respectively. 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.

Upon termination of employment with the District, the unused state personal leave balance shall remain in the employee's name until a service record is requested from another school district or sent to another school district upon the employee's request.

## **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 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 Sick Leave**

In accordance with administrative regulations, all full-time employees shall earn five work days of paid local sick leave per school year. Sick leave will be earned at a rate of one-half day for each 18 workdays per school year not to exceed the five days respectively.



All part-time employees, whose positions require at least ten months of service shall earn up to five equivalent workdays of local sick leave per school year on a prorated basis.

Local sick leave shall accumulate to a maximum of 60 leave days and shall be taken with no loss of pay. Local leave shall be used under the terms and conditions applicable to state sick leave accumulated prior to the 1995-96 school year, except as otherwise provided by this policy. The Superintendent or designee shall have the authority to make exceptions to provisions governing the use of local sick leave.

Employees may use local leave for the following reasons:

- Personal illness
- Immediate family illness
- Extended sick leave
- Birth of child
- Bonding time with a new child
- Adoption
- Foster placement of a child
- Death in the immediate family
- Care for an employee's spouse, son or daughter, or elderly parent or family member with a serious medical condition and/or under the direct and immediate care of the employee

**Leave Proration.** If an employee separates from employment with the district before his or her last duty day of the year, or begins employment after the first duty day, local sick leave will be prorated based on the actual time employed. Local sick leave will be earned at a rate of one-half day for each 18 workdays per school year not to exceed the five days respectively. When an employee separates from employment before the last duty day of the school year, the employee's final paycheck will be reduced by the amount of local sick leave the employee used beyond his or her pro rata entitlement for the school year.

Upon termination of employment with the District, the unused local sick leave balance shall be reduced to zero. An employee shall not be entitled to be reimbursed for unused local sick leave upon resignation, nonrenewal, or termination of employment.

## **Sick Leave Bank**

The sick leave bank is a benefit to assist employees in dealing with prolonged, severe, or life-threatening conditions that force them to exhaust paid leave and would otherwise result in a loss of income. The sick leave bank is a collective deposit of Local Sick Leave days received from enrolling employees and subsequent contributions from members. All days deposited in the bank become the property of the sick leave bank and are no longer available for use by the individual employee as accrued leave.

If the sick leave bank days drop to 30 available days or less, the District will solicit employees to voluntarily contribute leave days. Any one employee may donate no more than one day per solicitation. If the sick leave bank reaches a balance of zero available days, the sick leave bank will close until the next open enrollment period. The Benefits and Leave Manager will administer the sick leave bank and is responsible for receiving and granting requests for sick leave bank days. Four district employees, the Superintendent, The Chief Financial Officer, the Benefits and Leave Manager and the District Head Nurse, will serve on the sick leave bank committee to evaluate all requests of days from the sick leave bank. They will meet on an as needed basis to review requests for days.

**Eligibility and Enrollment.** Participation in the sick leave bank is available on a voluntary basis for all employees who work at least 20 hours per week, receive leave, and are eligible for BSD insurance benefits. Employees may join during the open enrollment period at the beginning of each school year. Only employees who contribute and join are eligible to use the sick leave bank.

**An employee may request days from the sick leave bank for the following family members:**

- Employee
- Parent of employee
- Spouse of employee
- Son, stepson, daughter, or stepdaughter of employee
- Child for whom the employee is legal guardian.

Membership requires a contribution of one local leave day, per year. An employee's "day" is equivalent to the number of hours in that employee's typical day. Any leave days contributed remain in the bank and will not return to the employee, even upon cancellation of the membership.

Eligible employees wishing to join the sick leave bank must complete the online enrollment option available at the beginning of each school year during open enrollment. The District will deduct a local leave day from the employee's local leave balance. After joining, membership in the sick leave bank carries forward from one year to the next without the employee needing to submit a new application. The Business & Finance Department will automatically deduct the leave day required for continued membership during the open enrollment period, unless and until the employee chooses to cancel membership, which is also done during annual open enrollment. Employees who do not join the sick leave bank during open enrollment period are ineligible to join until the next school year's open enrollment period.

**Qualifying to withdraw leave.** For the purposes of the sick leave bank, a catastrophic injury or illness is defined as a condition or combination of conditions that meets the following criteria:

- Life-threatening; and/or

- Requires 5 or more days of hospitalization or major medical treatment such as surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and the like; and
- Has totally incapacitated the individual from work; and
- Requires the services of an M.D. or D.O. throughout the period of the catastrophic leave, as certified by a medical professional.
- The condition of pregnancy shall not be covered by sick leave bank. However, medical complications that arise from childbirth shall be considered.
- Routine illnesses and general surgeries do not qualify as catastrophic, in general.

**Requesting leave.** A member who requests days from the sick leave bank must submit to the sick leave bank administrator prior to an extended medical leave or within 30 days after returning to duty. The employee may access the forms for requesting days by contacting the Benefits and Leave Manager.

Benefits from the sick leave bank will be available only after the member has exhausted all accumulated state and local leave days and any extended compensatory time.

If a sick leave bank member does not use all of the days granted from the sick leave bank, the unused days will be returned to the District. In no case will sick leave bank benefits allow an employee to receive more than his/her expected salary. An employee is ineligible for sick leave bank membership if they have received sick leave bank benefits five of the last eight years.

Each qualifying employee may receive a lifetime maximum of 50 extended leave days. Based on years of service with the District as of the first date of leave, the following schedule shows the number of extended leave days available to an employee:

<b>Years of Service with the District</b>	<b>Maximum Days per School Year</b>
1-5	10 days
6-10	15 days
11-15	20 days
16-20	25 days
21 or more	30 days

**Appeal procedure.** An employee may appeal the sick leave bank committee's decision within 10 working days of the notification of the decision. The employee must supply new, additional medical records for the appeal.

**An employee will lose the right to use the benefits of the sick leave bank by:**

- Termination or suspension of employment in the District,
- Abuse or misuse of the sick leave bank privileges , and/or
- Cancellation of membership by the employee during open enrollment.

## **Catastrophic Leave**

The District shall provide catastrophic leave for all employees eligible for TRS membership in the event of a catastrophic personal illness or disability or a catastrophic personal illness or disability of an immediate family member as defined for purposes of this provision. For catastrophic leave purposes, catastrophic illness or disability shall be limited to an illness or disability described in the current Federal Register of Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs) that rates an outlier threshold of 30 or greater and results in total disability from work. Such a condition may qualify only if treatment is under the supervision of a licensed physician or doctor of osteopathy who certifies the level of disability versus total disability. The physician's certification must include the recommended period of convalescence and/or rehabilitation. Only medical personnel shall determine whether a condition qualifies as catastrophic.

Catastrophic leave generally shall not cover normal pregnancy, routine illness, minor surgery, or minor injuries.

For purposes of catastrophic leave only, immediate family members shall mean son, step-son, daughter, step-daughter, child for whom the employee is legal guardian, or spouse.

Catastrophic leave days shall be available only after the employee has exhausted all state and local leave, any accumulated compensatory time, extended leave, and vacation days, if applicable.

The total number of days available to an employee for personal illness or disability that qualifies under this provision shall be up to 60 days available in 15-day increments. The total number of days available for an employee's immediate family member shall be up to 30 days available in 15-day increments. The following limitations and conditions shall apply to catastrophic leave days.

1. Catastrophic leave days shall be granted only for absences on working days; not for holidays, vacation days, or non-paid days.
2. An employee using catastrophic leave days shall not receive more than one hundred percent of his or her pre-illness or pre-disability earnings.
3. An employee must have a period of 5 years between approvals for catastrophic leave.
4. New employees must work at least one day in the school year to qualify for catastrophic leave for that year.

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

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

## **Leave Entitlements**

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

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

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

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

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

## **Benefits and Protections**

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

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

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

## **Eligibility Requirements**

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

- Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months;
- Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before taking leave\*; and
- Work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.

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

### **Requesting Leave**

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

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

Sufficient information could include informing an employer that the employee is or will be unable to perform his or her job functions, that a family member cannot perform daily activities, or that hospitalization or continuing medical treatment is necessary. Employees must inform the employer if the need for leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Employers can require a certification or periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. If the employer determines that the certification is incomplete, it must provide a written notice indicating what additional information is required.

### **Employer Responsibilities**

Once an employer becomes aware that an employee's need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, the employer must notify the employee if he or she is eligible for FMLA leave and, if eligible, must also provide a notice of rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. If the employee is not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for ineligibility.

Employers must notify its employees if leave will be designated as FMLA leave, and if so, how much leave will be designated as FMLA leave.

### **Enforcement**

Employees may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights. **For additional information:**

1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627

[www.wagehour.dol.gov](http://www.wagehour.dol.gov)

## Local Procedures for Implementing Family and Medical Leave Provisions

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period measured forward from the date an individual employee's FML begins.

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

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

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

**Fitness for Duty.** An employee that takes FML due to the employee's own serious health condition shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification form from the health care provider. When leave is taken for the employee's own serious health condition, the certification must address the employee's ability to perform essential job functions. The district shall provide a list of essential job functions (e.g., job description) to the employee with the FML designation notice to share with the health care provider. Fitness for duty is not required when an employee returns to work following leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition; to care for a child following birth, adoption, or foster care placement; or for qualifying exigency leave.

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

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

**Failure to Return.** If, at the expiration of FML, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the district may require the employee to reimburse the district's share of insurance premiums paid during any portion of FML when the employee was on unpaid leave. If

the employee fails to return to work for a reason beyond the employee's control, such as a continuing personal or family serious health condition or a spouse being unexpectedly transferred more than 75 miles from the district, the district may not require the employee to reimburse the district's share of premiums paid.

**District Contact.** Employees that require FML or have questions should contact the Benefits and Leave Manager 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 Benefits and Leave Manager should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to resume regular duties. Certified employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned if an appropriate position is available. If an appropriate position is not available, the employee may be assigned to another campus, subject to the approval of the campus principal. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, the employee will be reinstated to a position at the original campus at the beginning of the following school year.



## **Workers' Compensation Benefits**

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

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

## **Assault Leave**

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

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

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

## **Bereavement Leave**

State leave and/or state sick leave is available for use when there has been a death in the immediate family subject to the approval of the district. (Local sick leave may not be used for bereavement leave purposes. Hourly employees may use comp time for bereavement leave.)

If all other leave for bereavement has been exhausted, local sick leave may be used for bereavement purposes with the approval of the Superintendent or designee.

## **Jury Duty**

*Policies DEC, DG*

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

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

## **Compliance with a Subpoena**

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

## **Truancy Court Appearances**

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

## **Religious Observance**

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

## Military Leave

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

**Reemployment after Military Leave.** Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. Employees returning to work following military leave should contact the Human Resources Department. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years.

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

## Mental Health Leave for Peace Officers

*Policy DEC (Effective 9/1/2021)*

Bastrop ISD is required to provide mental health leave to peace officers employed in the district who experience a traumatic event in the scope of employment.

**Traumatic event.** A traumatic event is an incident or event that causes physical, emotional, or psychological harm. The person experiencing the distressing event may feel physically threatened or extremely frightened as a result. Traumatic events are characterized by a sense of horror, helplessness, serious injury, or the threat of serious injury or death. A traumatic event does not include an employee's reaction to legitimate personnel action, including a transfer, promotion, demotion, disciplinary action (e.g., verbal or written warning), or termination.

**Number of days.** A peace officer who experiences a traumatic event in the scope of employment is entitled to a maximum 5 days of paid leave per event.

**Request for days.** A peace officer must submit a written request for mental health leave to the Benefits and Leave Manager. A request must be within 72 hours of the traumatic event. The

Benefits and Leave Manager will notify the employee in writing regarding approval or denial of the request.

**Medical certification.** Medical certification by a health care provider as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act must be submitted with a request for peace officer mental health leave.

All requests, including the circumstances that lead to the request will be treated as confidential information. Supervisors will be informed when leave is approved, but other details will not be shared. All requests for leave will be coordinated with workers' compensation to ensure a first report of injury is filed, as applicable.

When an officer requests leave, the Benefits and Leave Manager will provide information on the Employee Assistance Program and any other mental health services or resources the officer may use.

## **Quarantine Leave for Peace Officers**

*Policy DEC (Effective 9/1/2021)*

A peace officer who is ordered by the Bastrop County Health Authority or supervisor to quarantine or isolate due to possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty is entitled to paid leave for the period specified in the order. A supervisor for purposes of authorizing quarantine leave is limited to the chief of police or superintendent.

**Certification.** An employee requesting leave is required to provide certification from the Bastrop County Health Authority to validate the need for leave. If leave is ordered by the Chief of Police or Superintendent, notification must be submitted to the Benefits and Leave Manager.

Certification from a health care provider may be required to support a medical need for leave.

# Communications & Community Relations

## District Communications

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

- Staff Newsletter – Biweekly digital newsletter called the ***BISD Insider*** is sent to all staff highlighting news and information from throughout the district relevant to staff.
- Family Newsletter – Biweekly digital newsletter called ***BISD Family Connects*** is sent to all families and all staff. This newsletter presents important announcements, news, dates, and other promotion of the positive things happening in our district relevant to parents and students.
- Annual Report – Annual publication highlighting BISD programs, statistics, demographics, staff, school board, and administration.
- Calendar – Annual publication mailed to all BISD households showcasing important dates and events, as well as district programs.

The district also uses digital means to communicate with employees including:

- Website - district and school websites
- Mobile App - available for download from the App Store or Google Play
- Webex – district messaging and group messaging between employees and teams of employees
- Social media channels - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn
- Blackboard - email, phone and text messages
- Peachjar - electronic fliers via email

## Community Relations

### After School & Summer Enrichment Opportunities

BISD offers three primary after school opportunities for students enrolled in BISD.

- **ACE:** The ACE program is one of the largest statewide afterschool programs in the country. The overarching goal of the program is to foster each student’s academic success by improving attendance, behavior, and academics, which lead to grade-level

promotion. ACE is offered at all BISD elementary, intermediate, and middle schools and is provided at no cost for qualifying students.

- **Beyond the Bell:** BTB provides a safe place after school for students in grades 9-12 to complete homework, receive tutoring, and get help with TSI and other state test preparation. BTB is provided at all BISD high school campuses at no cost for parents or students.
- **STARS:** Our STARS program is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and is staffed year-round by Bastrop ISD employees. It is available at all six elementary campuses during the school year and at select locations in the summer. STARS staff provide homework assistance, recreation, fitness, as well as engaging enrichment activities. STARS is a fee-based program. Summer programming is also available.

Please contact the Community Relations office at 512-772-7180 for more information.

### **Child Development Centers (CDC)**

BISD operates three child development centers, all of which are licensed through the Texas Department of Health & Human Services. Our child care centers are award-winning, four-star rated Texas Rising Star facilities. The CDC program is available to the children and grandchildren of Bastrop ISD employees, as well as to the children of teen parents. Depending upon space, the program also may be available to the District's partners in transportation, child nutrition, and operations, or to members of the public.

CDC locations include Bluebonnet Elementary, Cedar Creek Elementary, and Emile Elementary. Contact the Community Relations office at 512-772-7180 for more information about cost, enrollment, or other programming questions.

## **Employee Recognition and Appreciation**

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees, all of whom contribute to the success of Bastrop ISD in numerous ways. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in district publications distributed in print and digital arenas, on social media, and through special events and activities.

- **Teacher of the Year:** The district participates in the recognition program sponsored by the Texas Association of School Administrators to select one elementary and one secondary teacher of the year. The teachers chosen by the district go on to participate in the regional, state and/or national teacher of the year competition.
- **Paraprofessional of the Year:** In conjunction with the Teacher of the Year Program, the district conducts a Paraprofessional of the Year Program to recognize a support person whose contribution to district goals and objectives is significant.
- **Rock Star Rookie of the Year:** The Rock Star Rookie award seeks to recognize exceptional educators who are in their first three years of teaching. The District accepts nominations

each year to honor two outstanding teachers (one elementary and one secondary) with three or fewer years of experience.

- **Service Pins, Plaques and Other Awards:** The District and all campuses acknowledge employees who have reached milestones with BISD at 5-year increments (e.g., 5 year pin, 10 year pin, etc.). The purpose of the service awards is to honor employee loyalty and long-term contribution to BISD.
- **Retirement:** The District hosts an annual Retirement Reception at the end of each school year to honor those employees who have retired in that school year. Retirees are awarded a rocking chair with a custom brass nameplate honoring their years of service to BISD.

Several times each school year, the district accepts nominations from staff for the BISD Hero Award and the BISD Strong awards. These are available for all employees, as well as students.

- **BISD Hero Award:** This award recognizes any staff member or student who embodies what it means to be a supportive teammate, to make sacrifices for the benefit of others, to serve as an outstanding role model, and to stand up for people and be a champion for projects.
- **BISD STRONG Award:** This award recognizes any staff member or student who has demonstrated resilience, perseverance, and strength of character in the face of challenging personal or professional circumstances.
- **Ambassador Program:** Staff are selected from all campuses to serve as ambassadors for BISD throughout the district and to our community.

## 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:

## **General Provisions**

All complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events must be addressed in one grievance. Employees cannot 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.

Employees are entitled to representation at every level of the complaint process. All references to days are working days, meaning those days that District administrative offices are scheduled to be open. In calculating timelines under this policy, the day a document is filed is day zero, and all deadlines shall be determined by counting the following workday as "day one."

Neither the District nor any District employee may unlawfully retaliate against any employee for exercising his or her right to bring a complaint under this policy. Time is of the essence in resolving employee complaints and all timelines shall be strictly enforced. Extensions shall be permitted only by written agreement of the administration and the employee.

A link to Board Policy DGBA, can be found on the Bastrop ISD website ([www.bisdtx.org](http://www.bisdtx.org)).



# 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, including intentionally making a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC no later than the seventh day after the superintendent knew of the incident. See *Reports to the Texas Education Agency*, page 89, for additional information.

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

## *Texas Educators' Code of Ethics*

### **Purpose and Scope**

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

### **Enforceable Standards**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Standard 2.8** The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly subject a colleague to sexual harassment.

### **3. Ethical Conduct toward Students**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Dress and Grooming**

### **Employee Dress Code Guidelines**

All Bastrop ISD employees must follow a professional standard of appropriate dress as indicated below. Supervising administrators will offer employees additional guidance if needed, and will make the final determination regarding appropriateness of professional dress and grooming.

#### **Appropriate Dress**

- Suits, dresses, blouses, dress slacks, dress capris, cardigans, polo shirts, button up shirts, and dress shirts.
- Jeans may be worn on Fridays with a spirit shirt. On special event days such as testing, Homecoming, Field Day, etc., the principal may approve additional jeans days.
- Jeans with holes, tears or slits are not considered appropriate.
- Leggings are acceptable, but the blouse or dress top must be an appropriate length.
- Skirts and dresses must be appropriate length.
- Blouses or dress tops must cover the midriff and undergarments must not be visible.
- Clothing should not be revealing, provocative or excessively tight.

#### **Appropriate Shoes**

- Loafers, boots, tennis shoes, and dress sandals are appropriate.

#### **Appropriate Hair, Jewelry and Tattoos**

- Hair must be neat and clean.
- Extreme hair colors and styles are not allowed
- Facial hair is allowed, but must be trimmed.
- Jewelry worn at work should be in good taste with no visible body piercing other than pierced ears. Gauges are unacceptable and must be covered.
- Tattoos that are visible must be appropriate for the school environment.
- All of the above should not be distracting to students.

Employees shall comply with the standards of conduct set out in this policy and with any other policies, regulations, and guidelines that impose duties, requirements, or standards attendant to their status as District employees.

## **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.

Any district employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, or believes that another employee has experienced such prohibited conduct, should immediately report the alleged acts. The employee may report the alleged acts to his or her supervisor, the campus principal, the Title IX coordinator, or the superintendent. The district's Title IX coordinator's name and contact information is listed in the Equal Employment Opportunity section of this handbook.

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

Employees shall not tolerate harassment of others and shall make reports as required and outlined under REPORTING PROCEDURES, in this policy. A link to Board Policy DIA(LOCAL) and DIA(REGULATION), can be found on the Bastrop ISD website ([www.bisdtx.org](http://www.bisdtx.org)).

## **Harassment of Students**

*Policies DH, DHB, FFG, FFH, FFI*

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited.

Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. Any district employee who suspects or receives direct or indirect notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, of a student shall immediately notify the district's Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, or superintendent and take any other steps required by district policy.

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 has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect occurred must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. See *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*, page 62, and *Bullying*, page 93, for additional information.

A link to Board Policy DHB(LEGAL), FFH(LOCAL) and FFH(REGULATION), can be found on the Bastrop ISD website ([www.bisdtx.org](http://www.bisdtx.org)).

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

*Policies DG, FFG, GRA*

All employees with reasonable cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by neglect, as defined by Texas Family Code §261.001 are required by state law to make a report to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services(CPS), or appropriate state agency (e.g. state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering the facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Alleged abuse or neglect involving a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child (including a teacher) must be reported to CPS.

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

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

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

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

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

Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report it to the appropriate state agency. In addition, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and neglect. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying

an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

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

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at [bisdtx.org](http://bisdtx.org), Policy FFG. 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 otherwise 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 has reasonable cause to believe a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect following the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

## **Reporting Crime**

### *Policy DG*

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

## **Scope and Sequence**

### *Policy DG*

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

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

## **Technology Resources**

### *Policy CQ*

The district's technology resources, including its networks, computer systems, email accounts, devices connected to its networks, and all district-owned devices used on or off school property,



are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

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

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

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

Below are the technology policies, located on the district website located on Staff Resources - Administrative Regulations, which every employee needs to be familiar with:

- Employee Guidelines for Acceptable Use of Technology Resources
- Agreement for Acceptable Use of the Electronic Communications Systems by a non-school User
- Agreement for Electronic Instructional Materials or Technological Equipment

BASTROP INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
EMPLOYEE GUIDELINES FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

These guidelines are provided here so that employees are aware of the responsibilities they accept when they use District-owned computer hardware, operating system software, application software, stored text, data files, electronic mail, local databases, CD-ROMs, digitized information, communication technologies, and Internet access. In general, this requires efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of all technology resources.

1. Expectations are as follows:
  - a. Use of computers, other technical hardware, computer networks, and software is only allowed when granted permission by the employee's supervisor.
  - b. All users are expected to follow existing copyright laws. Copyright guidelines are posted and/or available in the library of each campus, as well as on the District's Web site.
  - c. Although the District has an Internet safety plan in place, employees are expected to notify their supervisor or the director of technology whenever they come across information or messages that are inappropriate, dangerous, threatening, or make them feel uncomfortable.
  - d. Employees who identify or know about a security problem are expected to convey the details to their supervisor or the director of technology without discussing it with others.
  - e. Employees are responsible for securing technology devices when not in use and for returning them in good working condition.
  - f. Employees, upon leaving employment, or upon request from the Superintendent, must return any District-owned equipment or resources in his/her possession.
  - g. 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 violates state or federal law or District policy, or 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.  
[See DH]
2. Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Using the network for illegal activities, including copyright or contract violations, or downloading inappropriate materials, viruses, and/or software, or hacking and host file-sharing software.
  - b. Using the network for financial or commercial gain, advertising, proselytizing, or political lobbying.
  - c. Accessing or exploring online locations or materials that do not support the curriculum and/or are inappropriate for school assignments, such as but not limited to pornographic sites.

- d. Vandalizing and/or tampering with equipment, programs, files, software, system performance, or other components of the network. Use or possession of hacking software is strictly prohibited.
- e. Causing congestion on the network or interfering with the work of others, e.g., chain letters or broadcast messages to lists or individuals.
- f. Wasting finite resources, i.e., downloading movies or music for non-educational purposes.
- g. Gaining unauthorized access anywhere on the network.
- h. Revealing personal information, including but not limited to, the home address or phone number of one's self or another person.
- i. Invading the privacy of other individuals.
- j. Using another user's account, password, or ID card or allowing another user access to your account, password, or ID.
- k. Coaching, helping, observing, or joining any unauthorized activity on the network.
- l. Posting anonymous messages or unlawful information on the system.
- m. Engaging in sexual harassment or using objectionable language in public or private messages, e.g., racist, terroristic, abusive, sexually explicit, threatening, demeaning, slanderous.
- n. Falsifying permission, authorization of identification documents.
- o. Obtaining copies of or modifying files, data, or passwords belonging to other users on the network.
- p. Knowingly placing a computer virus on a computer or network.
- q. Using personal devices on the District's network, with the exception of approved BYOT devices. [See Part 3: d. Bring Your Own Device]
- r. Inappropriately communicating with a student or minor through electronic communication, including but not limited to a cell phone, text messaging, electronic mail, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. [See DH(EXHIBIT)]

3. Acceptable use guidelines are as follows:

a. General Guidelines:

- i. All employees will have access to all available forms of electronic media and communication that is in support of education and research, and in support of the educational goals and objectives of the District.
- ii. Employees are responsible for their ethical and educational use of the computer online services in the District.

- iii. All policies and restrictions of the District's computer online services must be followed.
- iv. Access to the District's computer online services is a privilege and not a right. Each employee will be required to sign and adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy Agreement Sheet and adhere to the Acceptable Use Guidelines in order to be granted access to District computer online services.
- v. The use of any District computer online services in the District must be in support of education and research and in support of the educational goals and objectives of the District.
- vi. When placing, removing, or restricting access to specific databases or other District computer online services, school officials will apply the same criteria of educational suitability used for other education resources.
- vii. Transmission of any material that is in violation of any federal or state law is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to student or other confidential information, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, and computer viruses.
- viii. Any attempt to alter data, the configuration of a computer, or the files of another user without the consent of the individual campus administrator or technology administrator will be considered an act of vandalism and subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Board policy.

b. Network Etiquette:

- i. Be polite.
- ii. Use appropriate language.
- iii. Do not reveal personal data (home address, phone number, and phone numbers of other people).
- iv. Remember that the other users of the District's computer online services and other networks are human beings whose culture, language, and humor have different points of reference from your own.
- v. Users should be polite when forwarding email. The intent of forwarding email should be on a need-to-know basis.

c. E-Mail:

- i. E-mail should be primarily used for educational or administrative purposes.
- ii. E-mail transmissions, stored data, transmitted data, or any other use of the District's computer online services by employees or any other user will not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated staff to ensure safety and/or appropriate use.
- iii. All email and all email contents are property of the District.

d. Bring Your Own Device:

- i. Employees may bring their own device as part of our Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program.
- ii. Employees may use a personal device in place of (or along with) their district assigned devices if they choose. If the BYOD device is damaged or stolen while on BISD property, the user will not hold BISD liable for the replacement or repair of the device. The user will also be responsible for any data and/or SMS/MMS (texting) charges. BISD will not reimburse users for charges incurred while on BYOD devices. Additionally, BISD will not provide technical support for BYOD devices.
- iii. Employees may join the BISD guest wireless service with their BYOD device upon agreeing to install a policy key. This will ensure your device meets all security and filtering requirements.

4. Consequences:

- a. The employee, in whose name a system account and/or computer hardware is issued, will be responsible at all times for its appropriate use.
- b. Noncompliance with the guidelines published here, in the Student Code of Conduct, and in Board policy CQ(LOCAL) may result in suspension or termination of technology privileges and disciplinary actions. Violations of applicable state and federal law, including the Texas Penal Code, Computer Crimes, Chapter 33 will result in criminal prosecution, as well as disciplinary actions by the District.
- c. The District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to violations of computer crime laws. Content of e-mail and network communications using District equipment and network access is governed by the Texas Open Records Act, therefore, when legally requested, proper authorities will be given access to their contents.

## BASTROP INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

### AGREEMENT FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM BY A NONSCHOOL USER

You are being given access to the District's electronic communications system. Through this system, you will be able to communicate with other schools, colleges, organizations, and people around the world through the Internet and other electronic information systems/networks. You will have access to hundreds of databases, libraries, and computer services all over the world.

With this opportunity comes responsibility. It is important that you read the District's policy, administrative regulations, and agreement form and ask questions if you need help in understanding them. Inappropriate system use will result in the loss of the privilege to use this educational tool.

Please note that the Internet is a network of many types of communication and information networks. It is possible that you may run across some material you might find objectionable. While the District will use filtering technology to restrict access to such material, it is not possible to absolutely prevent such access. It will be your responsibility to follow the rules for appropriate use.

#### RULES FOR APPROPRIATE USE

You will be assigned an individual account, and you are responsible for not sharing the password for that account with others.

You will be held responsible at all times for the proper use of your account, and the District may suspend or revoke your access if you violate the rules.

Remember that people who receive email from you with a school address might think your message represents the school's point of view.

#### 1. INAPPROPRIATE USES

- a. Using the system for any illegal purpose.
- b. Disabling or attempting to disable any Internet filtering device.
- c. Encrypting communications to avoid security review.
- d. Borrowing someone's account without permission.
- e. Downloading or using copyrighted information without permission from the copyright holder.
- f. Intentionally introducing a virus to the computer system.
- g. Posting messages or accessing materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.
- h. Wasting school resources through improper use of the computer system.
- i. Gaining unauthorized access to restricted information or resources.

## 2. CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE

- a. Suspension of access to the system;
- b. Revocation of the computer system account; or
- c. Other legal action, in accordance with applicable laws.

## AGREEMENT FOR ELECTRONIC INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS OR TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT

In consideration for the District permitting me to use electronic instructional materials or technological equipment for personal business off school property or outside a school-sponsored event, I assume full financial responsibility for usage of such items to pay for any repairs and/or replace the Equipment if it is damaged, stolen, misplaced, or for any other reason not returned. I agree that Bastrop ISD may deduct money from my pay, not to exceed the Replacement Value, to cover the cost of repairing or replacing the Equipment that I may damage (other than normal wear and tear), lose, fail to return, or take without appropriate authorization during my employment. All use will be in accordance with applicable District policies, administrative regulations, and this agreement form. [See policies CQ and DH and provisions on the use of electronic media in the employee handbook.]

If the equipment is lost or stolen, the Superintendent or designee may reduce or eliminate my liability for loss or theft if (i) a police report is filed immediately and (ii) the Superintendent or designee does not find that the loss or theft resulted from my own wrongful or negligent acts or omissions. Such determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis. I understand that the equipment should not be left unattended.

I also understand that the District recommends that I obtain appropriate insurance for the equipment to cover loss, damage, or destruction. [See DG(LEGAL)] I also acknowledge my possession of any Equipment assigned to me in the district's asset management system and financial responsibility for the Equipment usage off school property or outside of a school-sponsored event. I acknowledge that Bastrop ISD has not required that I enter into this agreement as a condition of my employment with Bastrop ISD. I further acknowledge that Bastrop ISD may request the return of the Equipment at any time, and I will be required to return the Equipment within one business day after Bastrop ISD has made such a request. The term "Equipment" as used in this Agreement shall mean the technology equipment assigned to me in the district's asset management system.

**I understand that this user agreement must be renewed each school year.**

### **Personal Use of Electronic Communications**

*Policy CQ, DH*

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

As role models for the district's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic communications as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic communications interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to



disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

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

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment.
- The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, meal times, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct district business.
- The employee shall not use the district's logo or other copyrighted material of the district without express written consent.
- An employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on district business unless the employee first obtains written approval from the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy concerns.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the 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 DH (EXHIBIT)]
  - Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private email addresses. [See Policy GBA]
  - Copyright law [See Policy CY]
  - Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system. [See DH (EXHIBIT)]

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

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

### *Policy DH*

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

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

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

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

- *Electronic communications* means any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes email, text messages, instant messages, and any communication made through an Internet website, including a social media website or a social networking website.
- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the 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 communication.

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

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

- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students using any form of electronic communications, including mobile and web applications, that are not provided or accessible by the district unless a specific exception is noted below.
- Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility. An employee who communicates with a student using text messaging shall comply with the following protocol:
  - The employee shall include at least one of the student’s parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message;
  - The employee shall include his or her immediate supervisor as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and supervisor receive the same message; or
  - For each text message addressed to one or more students, the employee shall send a copy of the text message to the employee’s district email address.
- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page (“professional page”) for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee’s professional page.

- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM. 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 DH]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with one or more currently-enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through email, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.
- An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.
- All staff are required to use school email accounts for all electronic communications with parents. Communication about school issues through personal email accounts or text messages are not allowed as they cannot be preserved in accordance with the district's record retention policy.
- An employee shall notify his or supervisor in writing within one business day if a student engages in improper electronic communication with the employee. The employee should describe the form and content of the electronic communication.

## **Public Information on Private Devices**

### *Policy DH*

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

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

## **Criminal History Background Checks**

### *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 Texas Family Code

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

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

### *Policy DH*

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

An employee shall not manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances during working hours 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 drug.

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

### **Exceptions**

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

Each employee shall be given a copy of the District's notice regarding drug-free schools. A copy of this policy, a purpose of which is to eliminate drug abuse from the workplace, shall be

provided to each employee at the beginning of each year or upon employment. [See policy DI (Exhibit)]

### **Drug-Free Workplace Notice**

Policy DI (Exhibit)

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

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

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

As a condition of employment, an employee shall:

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

### **Drug-Free Awareness Program**

Policy DI (Local)

The District shall maintain a drug-free environment and shall establish, as needed, a drug-free awareness program complying with federal requirements. The program shall provide applicable information to employees in the following areas:

1. The dangers of drug use and abuse in the workplace.
2. The District's policy of maintaining a drug-free environment. [See DH(LOCAL)]
3. Drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs that are available in the community, if any.
4. The penalties that may be imposed on employees for violation of drug use and abuse prohibitions. [See DI(EXHIBIT)]

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

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

*Policies DH, FNCD, GKA*

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

## **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 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.

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

## **Charitable Contributions**

### *Policy DG*

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

## **Safety**

### *Policy CK series*

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. See Emergencies in the Multi-Hazard Plan, page 8 – 77 for additional information.

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

- Observe all safety rules.
- Keep work areas clean and orderly at all times.
- Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor.

- Operate only equipment or machines for which they have training and authorization.

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the Bastrop ISD Chief of Police at 850-464-7095.

## **Possession of Firearms and Weapons**

*Policies DH, FNCG, GKA*

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs, or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. A person, including an employee, who holds a license to carry a handgun may transport or store a handgun or other firearm or ammunition in a locked vehicle in a parking lot, garage, or other district provided parking area, provided the handgun or firearm or ammunition is properly stored, and not in plain view. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisor or call the Bastrop ISD Chief of Police at 850-464-7095 immediately.

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 Scot Bunch at 850-464-7095 or Colin Shadwell at 737-881-9046 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 Superintendent's office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

## **Pest Control Treatment**

*Policies CLB, DI*

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

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

# General Procedures

## Emergency School Closing

The district may close schools because of severe weather, epidemics, or other emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late, to release students early, or to cancel school, district officials will communicate in multiple ways including posting a notice on the district's website, notifying families directly by email/text/phone, and appropriate social media channels. In addition, we will notify local radio and television stations.

***BOB FM 103.5***  
***512-474-9233***  
***512-397-1400 fax***  
***1035bobfm.com***

***CBS Austin (KEYE-TV CH 42)***  
***512-490-2121***  
***512-490-2111 fax***  
***cbsaustin.com***

***Majic 95 FM KVUE CH 24***  
***512-329-6293***  
***512-329-6257 fax***  
***Majic.radio.com***

***KVUE CH 24***  
***512-459-9442***  
***512-533-2233 fax***  
***www.kvue.com***

## Emergencies

*Policies CKC, CKD*

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

are located throughout all district buildings. Employees should know the location of these devices and procedures for their use.

## **Purchasing Procedures**

### *Policy CH*

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the Business & Finance 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 the Purchasing Coordinator at (512) 772-7100 for additional information on purchasing procedures or refer to the Business & Finance Department Manual for more details.

## **Name and Address Changes**

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must complete and submit forms in TalentEd Records if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, or contact telephone number.

## **Personnel Records**

### *Policy DBA, GBA*

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

Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

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

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

## **Facility Use**

*Policies DGA, GKD*

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The Director of Operations is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the Director of Operations at (512) 772-7100 to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

# Termination of Employment

## Resignations

*Policy DFE, DHB*

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

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's **resignation within seven business days** following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in *Reports to Texas Education Agency* on page 89. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and there is evidence to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

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

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

## Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

*Policies DF Series, DHB*

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.

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's termination within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in *Reports to*



Texas Education Agency on page 89. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee is terminated and there is evidence to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

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 available online.

## **Dismissal of Noncontract Employees**

*Policies DCD, DP*

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, sex, 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 54.)

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

## **Discharge of Convicted Employees**

*Policy DF*

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

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

## Exit Interviews and Procedures

All employees leaving the district will be provided 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

*Policies DF, DHB, DHC*

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

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

TEC 21.006 and TEC 22.087 requires superintendents to notify TEA upon resignation or termination of a certified employee if there is evidence of misconduct for:

- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of district or school property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation
- Committing a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on district property or at a school-sponsored event

The reporting requirements above are in addition to the superintendent's ongoing duty to notify TEA when a certified employee or an applicant for certification has a reported criminal history or engaged in conduct violating the assessment security procedures established under TEC §39.0301. "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).

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

## **Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding**

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

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

# Student Issues

## Equal Educational Opportunities

*Policies FB, FFH*

In an effort to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Bastrop ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Questions or concerns about discrimination against students based on sex, including sexual harassment should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator at the campus the student currently attends. Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to the 504 Coordinator for students:

Deborah Ribble  
504 Coordinator  
1507 Pine Street  
Bastrop TX 78602  
[dribble@bisdtx.org](mailto:dribble@bisdtx.org)  
512-772-7835

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 administration 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/guardian that describes the reason for the absence. These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the student handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

## **Bullying**

### *Policy FFI*

Bullying is defined by §TEC 37.0832. All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying, including cyber bullying, to the campus principal or campus administrator. The district's policy FFI (LOCAL) includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students can be found at this [link](#).

## **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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