



# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

## 2018-2019

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

It is the policy of Taft ISD not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in its vocational programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Es norma de Taft ISD no discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo o impedimento, en sus programas, servicios o actividades vocacionales, tal como lo requieren el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, según enmienda; el Título IX de las Emiendas en la Educación, de 1972, y la Sección 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973, según enmienda.

This book is provided for educational purposes only and contains information to facilitate a general understanding of the law. It is not an exhaustive treatment of the law on these subjects nor is it intended to substitute for the advice of an attorney.

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# Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all District Policies and Procedures are included. Those that are have been summarized. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to the Personnel Office.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official District Policy Manual. Nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of noncontract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of District Policies and Procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate District office. Policy Manuals are located at the Superintendent's Office and are available for employee review during normal working hours. This Policy Manual is also located on the District website: [www.taftisd.net](http://www.taftisd.net).

# District information

## Mission statement

*Policy AE*

The Taft I.S.D. is responsible for preparing its students to live and work in a changing society. The District will best fulfill this responsibility by providing its students with an environment characterized by strong instructional leadership, high expectations for success for all students, sufficient time for teaching and learning, a safe and orderly school environment, frequent monitoring of student’s progress, and effective home-school communication.

To be successful, our District is committed to:

- prepare students to be lifelong learners,
- provide students with a balanced curriculum,
- provide instruction at the highest level of quality,
- assist students in improving in the areas of math, reading, and writing, and
- assist students in developing citizenship and economic responsibility.

The Taft I.S.D. believes that all students can learn the necessary basic skills to be independent, productive citizens.

## Board of trustees

*Policies BA, BAA, BBA, BBB, BBE, BBF, BE, BEC, BED*

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 law and regulations.

The Board of Trustees is elected by the citizens of the District to represent the community’s commitment to a strong educational program for the District’s children. Trustees serve without compensation, must be registered voters, and must reside in the District.

Current Board Members include:

Jimmie Adame .....	President
Ruben Lopez .....	Vice-President
Diana Buendia .....	Secretary
Manuel Banda .....	Member
Johnny Carvajal .....	Member
Sylvia J. Montemayor .....	Member
Pedro N. Rodriguez, Sr, .....	Master Trustee

The Board of Trustees usually meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Administration Office, 400 College Street, Taft, Texas 78390. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted at the Taft I.S.D Administration Office at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held within a two-hour notice.

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

## Helpful contacts

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

### **Main Phone: 361-528-2636**

Ext.2231	Director of Business....Ivonne Banda
2226	Payroll.....Michele Lopez
2241	Personnel.....Ricardo Treviño
2228	PEIMS.....Missy Hinojosa
2468	Maintenance.....Moe Olivarez
2465	Cafeteria.....Margie Longoria
2232	Chief of Police.....Tony Arsuaga

## Employment

### Equal employment opportunity

*Policy DAA, DIA*

The Taft I.S.D. does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to discrimination on any of the basis listed above should contact Ricardo Trevino.

### Job vacancy announcements

*Policy DC*

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are distributed on a regular basis and posted at the Central Administration Building, campus offices, and on the District's Website. [www.taftisd.net](http://www.taftisd.net) and on [www.esc2.net](http://www.esc2.net)

### Employment after retirement

*Tex. Gov't. Code § 824.602*

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed in certain positions on a full- or part-time basis without affecting their benefits, according to TRS rules and state law. Service retirees, who retire before May 31 may return to work in a Texas public school without a reduction in benefits one full calendar month after the retirement date, provided they meet specific conditions. Retiring employees should consult TRS

officials about conditions and restrictions on employment after retirement. Retirees may work in the following capacities without a loss of retirement benefits:

- As a principal or assistant principal or teacher in an acute shortage area on a full-time basis, if appropriately certified and following a 12-month break in service. Retirees that retired under early age or disability provisions are excluded.
- As a full-time bus driver (early age and disability retirees excluded).
- As a substitute at no more than the established daily substitute pay rate. (Individuals receiving disability retirement benefits may not work for more than 90 days in a school year.)
- On a half-time or less basis during any month. Half-time employment cannot exceed the lesser of 50 percent of the position's full-time load or 92 hours in a month.
- On a full-time basis during a six-month period during a school year, provided that this is their only employment in a Texas public school. Individuals who retire in August may begin employment in October of the school year following their retirement.

Under this last provision, retirees must submit annual written notice to TRS by the last day of the first month of full employment to avoid a disruption of benefits. Working any part of a month counts as a full month.

Other restrictions apply when a person has retired because of a disability. Individuals retiring because of a disability should contact TRS for details about employment restrictions.

**Shortage areas.** Certain retirees may return to work on a full-time basis as a principal or assistant principal or teacher in an acute shortage area without a reduction in their TRS annuity benefits. Acute teaching shortage areas are determined by the Board based on Commissioner of Education guidelines. When filling acute shortage area positions, the District must give hiring preference to certified applicants who are not retirees. To be eligible for full TRS benefits, a retiree must meet the following criteria:

- Have not been subject to a reduction in benefits for retirement at an early age or retired under disability provisions
- Have a 12-month continuous break in public school service since retirement
- Be appropriately certified for the position in the applicable school year

Employees can contact TRS for additional information by calling 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Website ([www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)).

## **Contract and noncontract employment**

*Policy DC, DCA, DCB, DCC, DCD, DCE*

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

**Probationary contracts.** Nurses and full-time professional employees new to the District and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive a probationary contract during their first year of employment. Former employees who are hired after at least a two-year lapse in District employment also may be employed by probationary contract. Probationary contracts are

one-year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed in public schools for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the District may not exceed one school year. For those with less experience, the probationary period will be three full 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 after they have successfully completed the probationary period. Campus principals and central office administrators are employed under 1-year term contracts. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract and employment policies.

**Noncertified professional and administrative employees.** Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as non-instructional administrators) are not employed by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the District.

**Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees.** All paraprofessional and auxiliary employees, regardless of certification, are employed at will and not by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the District without cause.

## Searches and alcohol and drug testing

### *Policy 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, work areas, lockers, and private vehicles parked on District premises or work sites or used in District business.

**Employees required having 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, when their duties include driving.

Alcohol and drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Additionally, Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted following accidents. Return-To-Duty and follow-up testing will be conducted when an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs returns to duty. Coaches, bus drivers, maintenance workers, heads of extracurricular activities, bus drivers aides, and mechanics are subject to random drug testing when their duties include driving



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, detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse, and the availability of assistance programs.

## First aid and CPR certification

*Policy DBA, DMA*

Head marching band directors, head coaches, or chief sponsors of an extracurricular athletic activity (including cheerleading) that is sponsored or sanctioned by the District or University Interscholastic League (UIL) must maintain and submit to the District proof of current certification in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED). Certification must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification.

## Reassignments and transfers

*Policy DK*

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the Superintendent or designee when the Superintendent 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. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the District process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and District Policy DGBA (Local).

Employees with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. Teachers requesting a transfer to another campus, before the school year begins, must submit their request by May 1. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Personnel Office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

## Workload and work schedules

*Policy DL*

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

Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation and 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 one day a week when no other personnel are available.

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

## **Notification of parents regarding qualifications**

*Policy DBA, DK, EHBD*

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 is not highly qualified.

Texas law also requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notification under ESSA is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals serving with an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take the EXCET exam) or individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. No later than the 30th instructional day after the date of assignment the superintendent or designee will send a written notice to parents. 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 Personnel Office.

## **Outside employment and tutoring**

*Policy DBD*

Employees who wish to accept outside employment or engage in other activities for profit must submit a written request to their supervisor. Approval for outside employment will be determined by the Superintendent and based on whether outside employment interferes with the duties of the regular assignment. 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. Teachers are not allowed to privately tutor their students for pay, except during the summer months.

## **Performance evaluation**

*Policy DN, DNA, DNB*

### ***ALL EMPLOYEES***

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, have a performance conference with their supervisor, and get the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

Taft ISD will handle 2nd appraiser requests in the following manner:

Step 1: Teacher formally, in writing, requests a second appraiser/appraisal.

Step 2: Principal informs Executive Director of Human Resources of the request in writing.

Step 3: Executive Director of Human Resources will assign the second appraiser from the list of approved certified appraisers.

Step 4: Executive Director of Human Resources will assign second appraiser as follows:

1. If first appraiser was the principal, then a central office administrator will conduct the 2nd appraisal
2. If first appraiser was the assistant principal, then the 2nd appraisal will be conducted by the principal

Step 5: The 2nd appraiser will give the teacher a 1 week (5 consecutive days) window notice of 2nd appraisal.

Step 6: After the 2nd appraisal is conducted the two (original and second) appraisals will be averaged and presented to the teacher.

Step 7: 1st appraiser (if 1st appraiser is not the principal), Principal and 2nd appraiser will meet with the teacher to review the original appraisal, the 2nd appraisal, and the combined final appraisal.

Step 8: If a teacher is placed on TINA (Teacher in need of assistance) or a TINA is deemed necessary to continue then the 1st appraiser(if 1st appraiser is not the principal), Principal and 2nd appraiser will meet with the teacher and develop a TINA with the teachers input.

## ***TEACHERS***

Teachers shall be appraised annually. A teacher may be appraised less frequently if the teacher agrees in writing, is on a continuing or term contract, has been employed with the District at least three years, has been rated at least proficient in every domain of his/her evaluation for the last two years, has never been placed on a Teacher In Need of Assistance Plan; and the teacher is State Board for Education Certification (SBEC) certified in the subject he/she is teaching. A teacher who is appraised less frequently than annually must be appraised at least once every other year. Either the teacher or the principal may require that an appraisal be conducted during a school year when an evaluation is not scheduled by providing written notice to the other party.

## **Employee involvement**

*Policy BQA, BQB*

At both the campus and District levels, Taft ISD offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees and influences 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.

## ***Professional development***

### *Policy DMA*

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

***Individuals holding renewable State Board for Education Certification (SBEC) certificates are responsible for obtaining the required training hours and maintaining appropriate documentation.***

## **Compensation and benefits**

### **Salaries, wages, and stipends**

#### *Policy DEA*

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and a pay structure established for each position. 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 and administrative employees are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid based on hourly wages or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each overtime hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek.

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

Employees should contact the Personnel Department, for more information about the District's pay schedules or their own pay.

### **Paychecks**

All professional and salaried employees are paid monthly. Hourly employees are paid every two weeks. Paychecks **will not** be released to any person other than the District employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization. During summer breaks, paychecks will be mailed directly to the employee's residence.

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

The schedule pay dates for the 2018-2019 school year can be obtained from your campus principal or the Business Office.

## Automatic payroll deposit

The District offers employees automatic payroll deposit. Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of 30 days is necessary to activate this service. With automatic deposit, an employee's pay is immediately available on the pay date. Contact the Business Office for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

## Payroll deductions

### *Policy CFEA*

Automatic payroll deductions for the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) and federal income tax are required for all full-time employees. Medicare tax deductions also are required for all employees hired after March 31, 1986. Temporary and part-time employees who are not eligible for TRS membership must have their Social Security contributions deducted.

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

## Overtime compensation

### *Policy DEA*

The District compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. All employees are classified as exempt or nonexempt for purposes of overtime compensation. Professional and administrative employees are ineligible for overtime compensation. Only nonexempt employees (hourly employees and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Nonexempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule, without advance approval from their supervisor.

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours weekly and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Employees who must work beyond their normal schedule but less than 40 hours per week will be compensated in straight-time pay or equivalent time off in the same workweek. Employees must physically work more than 40 total hours in a week to earn overtime compensation. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours.

For purposes of calculating overtime, a workweek begins, at 12:00 a.m. Monday and ends at 11:59 p.m. Sunday. Employees may be compensated for overtime at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 hours of compensatory time.
- Compensatory time must be used in the duty year that it is earned.
- Use of compensatory time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval as workload permits.

- An employee may be required to use compensatory time before using any other 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 Director of Business must give approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by the District. Employees must submit receipts, to the extent possible, to be reimbursed for expenses other than mileage and meals.

All employees shall be required to submit travel-related expense receipts within five (5) business days or their return from a District-related trip. An employee who fails to turn in their receipts for any travel-related expenses on three (3) separate occasions in a school/work year shall not be advanced any travel monies by the District on a subsequent District-related business trip and shall be required to submit a request for reimbursement of their travel-related expenses upon their return from the District-related business trip.

## **Health, dental, and life insurance**

### *Policy CRD*

Group health insurance coverage is available to all full-time employees. The district's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the board of trustees.

The health insurance plan year is from January 1 through December 1. New employees must complete enrollment forms within the **first two weeks** of employment. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during the December open enrollment. Employees should contact Jana Mayfield for more information.

## **Supplemental insurance benefits**

### *Policy CRG*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact Jana Mayfield 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 School Comp. 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 your immediate Supervisor. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code.

## **Unemployment compensation insurance**

### *Policy CRF*

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act. 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 Personnel 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 also eligible for TRS membership and to purchase a year of creditable service. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify TRS as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits are 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.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)).

## **Leaves and absences-*General***

### *Policy DEC*

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 have personal needs that will require long leaves of absence should call the Personnel Office for counseling about leave options, continuation of benefits, and proper notification of the District.

Employees who take an unpaid leave of absence may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. The District's contribution toward health care benefits for employees on leave authorized under the Family and Medical Leave Act will continue to be paid by the District, during the authorized leave. Otherwise, the district does not make benefit contributions for employees who are not on active payroll status.

Employees must follow District and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate leave request form. Any employee who is absent more than 3 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. Certification by a doctor who is duly registered and licensed under the Medical Practice Act of Texas, a licensed chiropractor, a Christian Science practitioner, or a licensed podiatrist (chiropracist) shall be required for personal illness absences in excess of 5 consecutive days.

Earned leave is available for an employee's use beginning in September. However, personal and local sick leave is earned on a daily/yearly basis. If an employee leaves the District before the end of the work year, the cost of any unearned leave days taken shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

## Personal leave

Policy DEC

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is earned at a rate of one-half workday for each 18 workdays of employment, up to the statutory maximum of five workdays annually. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. There is no limit on the accumulation of state personal leave, and it can be transferred to other Texas school districts and is generally transferable to education service centers. There are two types of personal leave: non-discretionary and discretionary.

**Nondiscretionary.** Leave that is taken for personal or family illness, emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. This type of leave allows very little or no advance planning and will be granted to employees in the same manner as sick leave.

**Discretionary.** Leave that is taken at an employee's discretion and that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a notice of the request 2 school days in advance of the anticipated absence to his or her principal or supervisor. Discretionary personal leave will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis. 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 subject to the following limitations:

- *A maximum of 5 percent of campus employees in each job category may be permitted to take discretionary personal leave at the same time.*
- *Discretionary leave may not last more than 2 consecutive workdays, except with special approval for extenuating circumstances.*
- *Discretionary personal leave may not be taken on the following key days:*
  - The first week of a new semester,*
  - the first day before or after a school holiday,*



*-days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams,  
-days scheduled for state-mandated assessments or District scheduled assessments, or  
-professional or staff development days.*

## **Sick leave**

Policy DEC

Previously accumulated state sick leave is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. Sick leave can be used only in 5 day increments except when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis or when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

If an employee uses more sick leave than he or she has earned, the cost of unearned sick leave will be deducted from the employee's next paycheck.

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

Additionally for purposes of personal illness, illness in the immediate family, family emergency, or death in the family, available leave shall be used in the following order:

1. Compensatory leave (if applicable)
2. Local leave
3. State personal leave
4. State sick leave accumulated prior to the 1995-96 school year
5. Sick Leave Bank (if applicable)
6. Catastrophic leave (if applicable)

## **Local leave**

## **Temporary disability**

*Policy DEC*

**Certified employees.** Any full-time employee whose position requires certification from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) is eligible for temporary disability leave. The purpose of temporary disability leave is to provide job protection to full-time educators who cannot work for an extended period of time because of a mental or physical disability of a temporary nature. A full-time educator may request to be placed on temporary disability leave or be placed on leave. Pregnancy and conditions related to pregnancy are treated the same as any other temporary disability.

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. The leave request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days. If disability leave is not approved, the employee must return to work or be subject to termination procedures.

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

When an employee is ready to return to work, the Superintendent should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to do the job. Professional employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned as soon as an appropriate position is available. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, professional employees will be reinstated at the beginning of the following school year.

## **Family and medical leave**

### *Policy DEC*

Employees who have been employed by the District for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months immediately preceding the need for leave are eligible for family and medical leave. Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave each year, without loss of any employment benefit accrued prior to the beginning of the leave, during any 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child
- To care for a spouse, parent, or child with a serious health condition
- An employee's serious health condition
- A qualifying exigency resulting from active military service of a spouse, child or parent

A husband and wife who are both employed by the District are subject to limits in the amount of leave that they can take to care for a parent with a serious health condition or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child; or to care for a covered military service member.

Eligible employees are entitled to continue their health care benefits under the same terms and conditions as when they were on the job and are entitled to return to their previous job or an equivalent job at the end of their leave. Under some circumstances, teachers who are able to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue their leave until the end of the semester.

Family and medical leave runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The District will designate the leave as family and medical leave, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

In some circumstances, employees may take family and medical leave in blocks of time or by reducing their normal weekly or daily work schedule. Intermittent leave may be taken under the following circumstances:

- An employee is needed to care for a seriously ill spouse, child, or parent
- An employee requires medical treatment for a serious illness
- An employee is seriously ill and unable to work
- An employee becomes a parent or has a foster child placed in his or her home

When the need for family and medical leave is foreseeable, employees who want to use it must provide 30-day advance notice of their need. When the need for leave is not foreseeable,

employees must contact the Personnel Department as soon as possible. Employees may be required to provide the following:

- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting the employee or an immediate family member
- Second or third medical opinions and periodic recertification of the need for leave
- Periodic reports during the leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work
- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider at the conclusion of leave of an employee's ability to return to work

Employees requiring family and medical leave should contact Personnel Department for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **Workers' compensation benefit**

*Policy DEC*

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 sick leave or any other paid leave benefits. While an employee is receiving workers' compensation wage benefits, the district will charge available leave proportionately so that the employee receives an amount equal to the employee's regular salary.

## **Assault leave**

*Policy DEC*

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

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. 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**

*Policy DEC (Local)*

During a full-time employee's annual term of employment as designated by contract, approved leave for preparation and/or attendance of a funeral of an immediate family member shall be limited to five consecutive workdays for each occurrence, subject to the approval of the

Superintendent or designee. State leave and/or sick leave shall be used by the employee. Full pay shall be deducted if no accrued leave is available. Funeral leave shall not be cumulative.

The definition of “immediate family” is as follows:

1. Spouse
2. 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.
3. Parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, or other individual who stands in loco parentis to the employee
4. Sibling, stepsibling,-in-law.
5. Grandparent and grandchild.

## **Jury duty**

*Policy DEC*

Employees will receive leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave for jury duty. Employees must present documentation of the service and documentation of any compensation they receive.

## **Other court appearances**

*Policy DEC*

Employees will be granted paid leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding. Absences for court appearances related to an employee’s personal business must be taken as personal leave or leave without pay (if no personal leave is available). Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

## **Military leave**

*Policy DEC*

Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, or reserve component of the armed forces will be granted a paid leave of absence without loss of any accumulated leave for authorized training or duty orders. Paid military leave will not exceed 15 days per year. In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service.

**Re-employment after military leave.** Employees who leave the District to enter into the United States uniformed services or ordered to active state military duty (Texas National Guard or Texas State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the District will be reemployed in the position they would have held if employment had not been interrupted or reassigned to an equivalent or similar position provided they are still qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment to the Superintendent of Schools.

**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 Personnel Department for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

# Employee relations and communications

## Employee recognition and appreciation

*Policy DJ*

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

## District communications

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

## Complaints and grievances

*Policy DGBA*

In an effort to hear and resolve employee concerns or complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the Board has adopted an orderly process that all employees must follow. 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:

Taft ISD  
205907

PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS: DBGA  
EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES (LOCAL)

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### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### INFORMAL PROCESS

The Board encourages employees to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with their supervisor, principal, or other appropriate administrator.

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

FORMAL  
PROCESS

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

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

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

FREEDOM FROM  
RETALIATION

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

NOTICE TO  
EMPLOYEES

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

SPECIFIC  
COMPLAINTS

For more information on how to proceed with complaints regarding:

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

OTHER REVIEW  
PROCESSES

Complaints alleging certain forms of harassment shall be processed in accordance with DIA.

Complaints arising from any of the following must be addressed through the local and statutory processes indicated below:

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

This policy shall apply to all other employee complaints.

DEFINITIONS

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

COMPLAINT/  
GRIEVANCE

The terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning. A complaint under this policy may include:

1. Grievances concerning an employee's wages, hours, or conditions of work;
2. Specific allegations of unlawful discrimination in employment based on the employee's sex, race, religion, national origin, age, or disability;
3. Specific allegations of unlawful discrimination or retaliation based on the employee's exercise of legally protected rights; or
4. Specific allegations of adverse personnel action based on the

employee's good faith report to an appropriate law enforcement authority of a violation of a law by the District or a District employee, i.e., "whistleblower complaints." [See DG]

5. Complaints arising from the dismissal or termination of an at-will employee. [See DCD]
6. Complaints arising from the termination at end of year of the probationary contract of a professional employee. [See DFAA]

**FILING**

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

**RESPONSE**

At Levels One and Two, "response" shall mean a written communication to the employee from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered or sent by U.S. Mail to the employee's mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on the deadline and received by the employee or designated representative no more than three days after the response deadline.

**DAYS**

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

**REPRESENTATIVE**

"Representative" means any person who or an organization that does not claim the right to strike and is designated by the employee to represent him or her in the complaint process.

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

**WHISTLEBLOWER COMPLAINTS**

Whistleblower complaints shall be filed within the time specified by law. Such complaints shall first be filed in accordance with LEVEL TWO, below. Time lines for the employee and the District set out in this policy may be shortened to allow the Board to make a final decision within 60 days of the initiation of the complaint. [See DG]

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

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

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

**UNTIMELY  
FILINGS**

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

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

**COSTS INCURRED** Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

**COMPLAINT FORM** Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District.

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

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

**LEVEL ONE**

Complaint forms must be filed:

1. Within 15 days of the date the employee first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem.

In most circumstances, employees on a school campus shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal; other District employees shall file Level One complaints with their immediate supervisor.

If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

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

The appropriate administrator shall hold a conference with the employee within ten days after receipt of the written complaint.

The administrator shall have ten days following the conference to provide the employee a written response.

**LEVEL TWO**

If the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the



time for a response has expired, the employee may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

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

The Superintendent or designee shall hold a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. At the conference, the Superintendent or designee shall consider only the issues and documents presented at Level One and identified in the Level Two appeal notice. The Superintendent or designee shall have ten days following the conference to provide the employee a written response.

### LEVEL THREE

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

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

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

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board with copies of the complaint form, all responses, all appeal notices, and all written documentation previously submitted by the employee or the administration. The Board shall consider only those issues and documents presented at the preceding levels and identified in the appeal notice.

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

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

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

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If for any reason the Board fails to reach a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

## Employee conduct and welfare

### Standards of conduct

#### *Policy DH*

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the district and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. *All* 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 as stated in DH (Exhibit). Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day the superintendent first learns of the incident.

The Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, which all district employees must adhere to.

### **Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators**

#### **Statement of Purpose**

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty. 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.

## **Professional Standards**

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

**Standard 1.1** The educator shall not knowingly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district or educational institution.

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

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

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

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

### **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, sex, disability, or family status.

**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 under this chapter.

### 3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

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

**Standard 3.2** The educator shall not knowingly treat a student in a manner that adversely affects the student's learning, physical health, mental health, or safety.

**Standard 3.3** The educator shall not deliberately or knowingly 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, sex, disability, national origin, religion, or family status.

**Standard 3.5** The educator shall not engage in physical mistreatment of a student.

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

**Standard 3.7** The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or knowingly allow any student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

## Harassment

*Policies DH, DIA*

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees 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.

Employees who believe they have been harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor, or appropriate district official. If the campus principal or supervisor is the subject of a complaint, the employee should report the complaint directly to the superintendent. A complaint against the Superintendent may be made directly to the board. An employee who suspects or knows that a student is being harassed by a school employee or by another student shall immediately inform his or her principal or immediate supervisor.

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

Taft ISD  
205907

EMPLOYEE WELFARE:  
FREEDOM FROM HARASSMENT

DIA  
(LOCAL)

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*Note:* This policy addresses harassment of District employees. For harassment of students, see FFH. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

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The District prohibits sexual harassment and harassment based on a person's race, color, gender, national origin, disability, religion, or age.

Employees shall not tolerate harassment of others and shall make reports as required at reporting procedures below.

SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment of an employee is defined as unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

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

EXAMPLES

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to, sexual advances; touching intimate body parts; coercing or forcing a sexual act on another; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communication, or contact.

OTHER  
PROHIBITED  
HARASSMENT

Harassment of a District employee on the basis of the employee's race, color, gender, national origin, disability, religion, or age includes physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct related to these characteristics when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

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

EXAMPLES

Examples of prohibited harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for workplace accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other types of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

An employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to an appropriate person designated below.

Any District employee with supervisory authority who receives notice that another employee has or may have experienced prohibited harassment is required to immediately report the alleged acts and take whatever other steps are required by this policy.

Any other person who knows or believes that a District employee has experienced harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to the appropriate person designated by this policy.

TIMELY REPORTING

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

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

DISTRICT OFFICIALS

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

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

NOTIFICATION OF REPORT

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

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

INVESTIGATION OF THE REPORT

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

Upon receipt or notification of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute sexual harassment or other prohibited harassment as defined by District policy. If so, the District official shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation.

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

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

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others

with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.

The District's obligation to conduct an investigation is not satisfied by the fact that a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending.

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

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

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

The District may take disciplinary action based on the results of an investigation, even if the District concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of harassment prohibited by law or District policy.

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

The complainant shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

**RETALIATION PROHIBITED** Retaliation against an employee alleged to have experienced harassment, a witness, or another person who makes a report or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited. A person who makes a good faith report of prohibited harassment shall not suffer retaliation for making the report. A person who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding prohibited harassment is subject to appropriate discipline.

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

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

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DATE ISSUED: 04/01/2005  
UPDATE 75  
DIA(LOCAL)-A

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district's currently adopted policy manual. It does not reflect updating activities in progress. The official, authoritative manual is available for inspection in the office of the Superintendent. [See BF (LOCAL) for further information.]

## Harassment of students

*Policies DH, FFG, FFH*

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment or abuse of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law

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

Taft ISD  
205907

STUDENT WELFARE:  
FREEDOM FROM HARASSMENT

FFH  
(LOCAL)

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**Note:** This policy addresses harassment of District students. For provisions regarding harassment of District employees, see DIA. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

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The District prohibits sexual harassment and harassment based on a person's race, color, gender, national origin, disability, or religion.

Employees shall not tolerate harassment of students and shall make reports as required at REPORTING PROCEDURES, below.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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

1. A District employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
2. The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:



- a. Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities; or
- b. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

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

**BY OTHERS**

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

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

**EXAMPLES**

Examples of sexual harassment of a student may include, but are not limited to, sexual advances; touching intimate body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

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

**OTHER PROHIBITED HARASSMENT**

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

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

**EXAMPLES**

Examples of prohibited harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

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

Any District employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced prohibited harassment is required to immediately report the alleged acts to an appropriate person designated below.

Any other person who knows or believes that a student has experienced prohibited harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to the appropriate person designated below.

Reports of known or suspected child abuse or neglect shall be made as required by law. [See FFG]

TIMELY REPORTING

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

Oral or written reports of prohibited harassment shall normally be made to the campus principal. A person shall not be required to report harassment to the alleged harasser; nothing in this policy prevents a person from reporting harassment directly to one of the District officials below:

DISTRICT OFFICIALS

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

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

NOTIFICATION OF REPORT

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

NOTICE TO PARENTS

The principal or District official shall promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited harassment by a District employee or another adult associated with the District. In cases of student-to-student harassment, the District shall promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced harassment when the allegations presented, if proven, would constitute sexual harassment or other prohibited harassment as defined by District policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

INVESTIGATION OF THE REPORT

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

Upon receipt or notification of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute sexual harassment or other prohibited harassment as defined by District policy. If so, the District official shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation.

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

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

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

The District's obligation to conduct an investigation is not satisfied by the fact that a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending.

#### CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION

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

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

#### DISTRICT ACTION

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

The District may take disciplinary action based on the results of an investigation, even if the District concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of harassment prohibited by law or District policy.

#### APPEAL

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

#### RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Retaliation against a student alleged to have experienced harassment, a witness, or another person who makes a report or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited. A person who makes a good faith report of prohibited harassment shall not suffer retaliation for making the report. A person who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding prohibited harassment is subject to appropriate discipline.

#### RECORDS RETENTION

Retention of records shall be in accordance with FB (LOCAL).

#### ACCESS TO POLICY

Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to District employees and included in the student handbook. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

**This online presentation of your district's policy is an electronic representation of TASB's record of the district's currently adopted policy manual. It does not reflect updating activities in progress. The official, authoritative manual is available for inspection in the office of the Superintendent. [See BF (LOCAL) for further information.]**

## Drug-abuse prevention

*Policies DH, DI*

Taft I.S.D 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:

### EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

DH  
(LOCAL)

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All District employees shall perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, District policy, and ethical standards. [See DH(EXHIBIT)]

All District employees shall recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community and shall work cooperatively with others to serve the best interests of the District.

Employees wishing to express concern, complaints, or criticism shall do so through appropriate channels. [See DGBA]

### VIOLATIONS OF STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

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. Violation of any policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment. [See DCD and DF series]

### SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

All employees shall adhere to District safety rules and regulations and shall report unsafe conditions or practices to the appropriate supervisor.

### HARASSMENT OR ABUSE

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of:

1. Other employees, as defined at DIA.

2. Students, as defined at FFH. [See FFG regarding child abuse and neglect]

While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other persons, including Board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents.

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS** Employees shall not form romantic or other inappropriate social relationships with students. Any sexual relationship between a student and a District employee is always prohibited, even if consensual. [See FFH]

**TOBACCO USE** Employees shall not use tobacco products on District premises, in District vehicles, or at school or school-related activities. [See also GKA]

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

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

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

**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.

**NOTICE** Each employee shall be given a copy of the District's notice regarding drug-free schools. [See DI(EXHIBIT)]

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.

**ARRESTS AND CONVICTIONS** An employee who is arrested for any felony or any offense involving moral turpitude shall report the arrest to the principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of the arrest. An employee who is convicted of or receives deferred adjudication for such an offense shall also report that event to the principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of the event.

**MORAL TURPITUDE** Moral turpitude includes but is not limited to:

1. Dishonesty; fraud; deceit; theft; misrepresentation;
2. Deliberate violence;

3. Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor;
4. Felony possession, transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to possess, transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance defined in Chapter 481 of the Health and Safety Code;
5. Acts constituting public intoxication, operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, or disorderly conduct, if any two or more acts are committed within any 12-month period; or
6. Acts constituting abuse under the Texas Family Code.

DRESS AND GROOMING

The dress and grooming of District employees shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for their assignments, and in accordance with any additional standards established by their supervisors and approved by the Superintendent.

DATE ISSUED: 04/01/2005  
 UPDATE 75  
 DH(LOCAL)-A

**This online presentation of your district's policy is an electronic representation of TASB's record of the district's currently adopted policy manual. It does not reflect updating activities in progress. The official, authoritative manual is available for inspection in the office of the Superintendent. [See BF (LOCAL) for further information.]**

Taft ISD  
 205907

EMPLOYEE WELFARE

DI  
 (EXHIBIT)

DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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DATE ISSUED: 06/22/2000  
UPDATE 63  
DI(EXHIBIT)-B

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**This online presentation of your district's policy is an electronic representation of TASB's record of the district's currently adopted policy manual. It does not reflect updating activities in progress. The official, authoritative manual is available for inspection in the office of the Superintendent. [See BF (LOCAL) for further information.]**

## Reporting suspected child abuse

*Policy DG, DH, FFG, GRA*

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Abuse is defined by the Texas Family code and includes, but is not limited to, any sexual conduct involving an educator and a student or minor. Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to the Campus Counselors or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

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

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution for the commission of a criminal offense. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agencies. In addition, employees must cooperate with child abuse and neglect investigators. Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report to the appropriate state agency. Interference with a child abuse investigation

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

## **Fraud and financial impropriety**

*Policy DG, CAA*

All employees should act with integrity and diligence in duties involving the District's financial resources. The District prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, as defined below. Fraud and financial impropriety includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- 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
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the District

## **Conflict of interest**

*Policy BBFA, DBD*

Employees are required to disclose to their supervisor 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 non-school interest
- Any other obligation or relationship, or
- Non-school employment

An employee with a substantial interest in a business entity or interest in real property must disclose the interest to the district prior to the award of a contract or authorization of payment. This is done by filing an affidavit with the official Board record keeper stating the nature and extent of the interest and shall abstain from further participation in the matter. An employee is also considered to have substantial interest if a close family member (e.g., spouse, parent, child, or spouse's parent or child) has a substantial interest.

## **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 may result in criminal prosecution. 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.

## **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 but not limited to fax, telephone, computer, copier) for political activities is prohibited at all times. Use of work time for political activities is also prohibited.

## **Safety**

### *Policy CK*

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the Personnel Office.

## **Tobacco use**

### *Policies DH, GKA, FNCD*

State law prohibits smoking or using tobacco products is prohibited on all district-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off campus. 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 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.

## **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 plea, or guilty plea, or other adjudication of any felony, any offense involving moral turpitude, 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 of moral turpitude

Moral turpitude includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft
- Misrepresentation
- Deliberate violence
- Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor
- Drug- or alcohol-related offenses
- Acts constituting abuse under the Texas Family Code

An employee who is convicted of or receives deferred adjudication for such an offense must also report that event to the principal or immediate supervisor within three days of the event.

## **Possession of firearms and weapons**

*Policies FNCG, GKA*

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the District's weapons policy should report it to their supervisors or call Tony Arsuaga, Taft I.S.D Chief of Police, immediately.

## **Visitors in the workplace**

*Policy GKC*

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time shall be permitted only with the principal's approval, and such visits shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment.

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.

## **Copyrighted materials**

*Policy EFE*

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of copyright law relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance, or display of copyrighted materials (i.e., printed material, videos, computer data and programs, etc.). Rented videotapes are to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or backups of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement. Electronic media used in a classroom shall be for educational purposes only.

## **Computer use and data management**

### *Policy CQ*

The District's electronic communications systems, including its network access to the Internet, is primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use of the system is permitted if the use:

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

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

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

## **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 piece of district property. A copy of the District's Management Plan is kept in the Superintendent of Schools Office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

## **Pest control treatment**

### *Policy CLB, DI*

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

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a District building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located at the Taft I.S.D Administration Building and all campus offices. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

## **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

## **Bad weather closing**

*Policy CKC*

The District may close schools for a full or part of a day because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the District's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late or to release students early, the following radio and television stations will be notified by school officials:

### **Radio Stations**

KRYS -----99.1 FM

KEYS -----1440 AM

KUNO-----99.9 FM/1400 AM

### **Television Stations**

KIII

KRIS

KZTV

## **Emergencies**

*Policy CKC*

All employees should be familiar with the evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas. Fire, tornado, and other emergency drills will be conducted to familiarize employees and students with evacuation procedures. Fire extinguishers are located throughout all District buildings. Employees should know the location of the extinguishers nearest their place of work and how to use them.

## **Purchasing procedures**

*Policy CH*

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

## **Name and address changes**

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Personnel Office and the Chief Payroll Clerk if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, home telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary.

## **Personnel records**

*Policy GBA*

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

- Address
- Phone number
- Social Security Number
- Information that reveals whether they have family members

The choice to not allow public access to this information may be done at any time by submitting a written request to the Personnel Office. New or terminating employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information will be released to the public.

## Building use

*Policy GKD*

The office of the Superintendent is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact Kristen Herrera at 528-2636 ext. 2221 to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

# Termination of Employment

## Resignations

*Policy DFE*

**Contract employees.** Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Superintendent. Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the Board of Trustees. Approval shall be granted in accordance with Board Policy and Regulations. Resignation without the consent of the Board may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the acts listed in Reports to the State Board for Educator Certification.

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

## Dismissal or nonrenewal of contract employees

*Policies DFAA, DFAB, DFBA, DFBB, DFCA, DFD, DFF*

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

certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the time lines and procedures can be found in the DF series policies.

## **Dismissal of noncontract employees**

### *Policy DCD*

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

## **Exit interviews and procedures**

### *Policy DC*

Exit interviews will be scheduled for all employees leaving the District. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the District with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the District with feedback on his or her employment experience.

All District keys, books, property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment. The District may withhold the cost of any unreturned items from the final paycheck.

## **Reports to State Board for Educator Certification**

### *Policy DF*

The dismissal or resignation of a certified employee will be reported to the SBEC when the Superintendent first learns about an alleged incident of conduct that involves the following:

- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other illegal conduct with a student or a minor
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of school property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle the individual to a professional position or to receive additional compensation associated with a position
- Committing a crime on school property or at a school-sponsored event
- Reports concerning court-ordered withholding
- A reported criminal history
- Soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor

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

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

## **Student issues**

### **Equal educational opportunities**

#### *Policy FB*

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin should be directed to the Superintendent, the District's Title IX Coordinator. Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to Ricardo Trevino.

### **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 (if 18 or older or emancipated by a court)
- School officials with legitimate educational interests

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

### **Parent and student complaints**

#### *Policy FNG*

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

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teachers or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved should be directed to the campus principal. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with a principal's response. Once all administrative complaint procedures are exhausted, parents and students can bring complaints to the Board of Trustees.

## **Administering medication to students**

*Policy FFAC*

Only designated employees can administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. A student who must take medication during the school day must bring a written request from his or her parent and the medicine, in its original, properly labeled container. Contact the principal or school nurse for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

## **Dietary supplements**

*Policy DH, FFAC*

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

## **Psychotropic drugs**

*Policy FFAC*

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

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 discipline**

*Policies FN, FO*

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 students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student, upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. These requirements are addressed in



campus training and in the Student Handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

## **Hazing**

*Policy FNCC, FO*

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of “initiation rites” of a school club or organization. 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 discipline person.

**See Addendum to Employee Dress Code Regulations.**

## **Addendum to Employee Dress Code Regulations**

### **August 8, 2016**

Employees are expected to dress in a manner that sets a good example for the students and does not detract from the educational environment at Taft I.S.D. Employees clothing and grooming habits will present a neat, clean, and professional appearance. Clothing will be job appropriate, tasteful, and coordinated. Additionally, it will be of the appropriate size, fit, and length. The decision of the principal or organizational manager will determine the appropriateness of dress and appearance, and shall be in accordance with any additional standards approved by the Superintendent. A good rule of thumb is “if in doubt, do not wear it”. The following minimum standards shall apply:

1. Employees are expected to dress in a professional, non-casual manner for all school days and staff development days.
2. All clothing will contribute to the professional appearance of the employee. Clothing will fit properly, be cleaned and pressed, and be in good repair. Employees are not to wear clothing that is tight, revealing, short, torn, tattered, dirty and excessively faded, or with visual, written, or implied messages that are likely to disrupt the school environment.
3. Appropriate undergarments must be worn. Undergarments should not be visible.
4. College shirts may be worn with dress pants or skirts each Wednesday.
5. The site administrator may designate no more than one day per week as “school spirit” day. On that particular day, it is permissible to wear jeans and approved school spirit shirts. Jeans with holes are not allowed. On special days/events (i.e., Western Day, Red Ribbon Week, and Homecoming, etc.) the site administrator may designate special attire. Sweat suits, jogging/wind suits, overalls, or denim pants/jeans of any color may not be worn except on designated days, unless allowed by supervisor due to job requirements.
6. Women’s skirts/dresses shall be no shorter than slightly above the knee, and slits, flaps, or openings in skirts/dresses may not be shorter than fingertip length.
7. Capri pants may be worn. Walking shorts, city shorts, or skorts are not permitted.
8. Leggings may be worn only under a dress/skirt.
9. Earrings may be worn by female employees only, and ears are the only exposed areas of the body on which pierced jewelry may be worn.
10. Tattoos must be covered.
11. All employees must display school identification during normal school operational hours.
12. Footwear must be worn at all times. Shoes traditionally worn around the home (i.e., house shoes) or to the beach (i.e., flip-flop design or crocs) are not permitted. Tennis/athletic shoes that are clean and in good condition may be worn only on designated days.
13. Tank tops, backless apparel, midriffs, tops with straps less than 2 inches, tops that are revealing (deep or low cut), or see through blouses are not acceptable. “Fun wear” (beach attire, shorts, laid back wear) clothing is not appropriate.
14. Female staff may wear sleeveless tops/blouses, if the garments fit closely under the arm.
15. Men shall wear dress or casual slacks. Shirts with collars or sweaters or turtlenecks shall be worn. Socks must be worn with shoes. Shorts may not be worn except for Physical Education instructors.

16. Men are permitted facial hair if trimmed and moderate in style. All facial hair, however, must be fully established by the start of the school year or return from school holidays. Hair shall be well groomed and not extend below the base of the neck.
17. Administrators must first get approval by Central Office prior to allowing “exceptions” to the staff dress code.

Exemplary conduct, personal appearance, and appropriate attire are the rule, not the exception, for the staff of Taft I.S.D. Please keep in mind the image you project, to both students and our community, is greatly enhanced by your clothing selections.

MEMORANDUM

TO: All District Employees  
FROM: Mr. Joe Lopez, Superintendent of Schools  
DATE: August 10, 2018  
RE: Employee Handbook 2018-2019

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Welcome to another great year at Taft Independent School District! As you know, every school year, the District distributes an Employee Handbook. These documents are critically important as they contain most of the District's rules and regulations in regards to employment. In the interest of efficiency, please be advised that the Employee Handbook will be made available this year in the office of all campus Principals and Central Office. You are more than welcome to view the Employee Handbook at any time during the school year. Furthermore, if you would like a printed copy, please visit our website at [www.taftisd.net](http://www.taftisd.net) and you can download it from the website in the convenience of your home. You may also request a printed copy from your supervisor.

Please sign and return to your supervisor. Thank you for your attention and support of all District endeavors.

Employee Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_