

TAHOKA

Independent School District

2021-2022

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



Reviewed by the Tahoka ISD Board of Trustees on July 2021

The Tahoka Independent School District shall comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws, rules, and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any educational programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, age or veteran status(except where age, sex, or disability constitutes a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Tahoka Independent School District is an Equal Opportunity employer.

Non-Discrimination Statement: The TISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, gender, national origin, religion or disability in educational programs, admissions/enrollment decisions or activities which it operates as required by Title VI, Title IX, Title II and Section 504.

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Employee Handbook Receipt

Name _____

Campus/Department _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Tahoka ISD Employee Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

Employees will receive an electronic copy of the employee handbook, which they may print out if they so choose.

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

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

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

Signature

Date

Please sign and date this receipt and forward it to your immediate supervisor.

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 Superintendent.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. Nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of non contract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate district office. District policies can be accessed on line at <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/840>.

Tahoka Independent School District Motto

“WE SERVE, STUDENTS WIN!” is our motto.

Education Mission of Tahoka ISD

The purpose of Tahoka ISD is to serve the needs of our students so that they may be successful in learning.

District Information

Description of the District

Tahoka ISD is located in parts of Lynn and Terry Counties encompassing approximately 336 square miles. The district has approximately 600 students and just over 100 employees. There are 3 campuses in the district consisting of an elementary school, middle school and high school. The district's operating budget is about \$7 million annually.

District Vision, Values, Goals, and Objectives

Based on the desires expressed through input by all stakeholders, the following vision is intended to provide a picture of the qualities of the district that Tahoka Independent School District strives to become. Here are the 4 C's of the TISD vision:

I. COMMUNITY

Our district recognizes the importance of establishing effective partnerships with the larger community – parents, residents, businesses, government agencies, and churches. It strives to develop the community's allegiance toward TISD values and encourages shared ownership in the district. In our district:

- A. The community demonstrates its support for the vision and mission of the school district through various mechanisms of support which may include but are not limited to supporting fundraising efforts, displaying TISD memorabilia/media, publicly recognizing student successes, participating in mentoring programs with TISD students, serving as guest speakers, and promoting ideas which establish the importance of education for TISD students.
- B. The community actively participates in the life of the district by attending programs, offering their expertise to the benefit of the district, volunteering service, and partnering with the district by assisting in the processes that have been designed to enhance various aspects of the district.
- C. The community calls upon the district to establish effective two-way communication that both provides information and seeks feedback which will be used in future decision-making processes.
- D. The district encourages the community to be actively involved in district celebrations that promote students, staff members, and stakeholders.
- E. The community has ready access to the district's resources and facilities, and is also willing to share their resources when called upon the district as needed.
- F. Parents play an active role in the education of their children, monitor their children's academic performance, and work with teachers, school administrators, and district administrators to emphasize the importance of education.

II. CHARACTER

Although students have a main role of learning essential knowledge and skills in order to successfully promote from one grade to the next, the community and other stakeholders place much value in the character building that is done in the school system throughout the students'

PK-12 experience. In the final analysis, the effectiveness of any district is assessed on the basis of the conduct, character, and achievement of its students. In our district, students:

- A. Accept responsibility for their learning, decisions, and actions.
- B. Experience failure, yet are able to learn from their mistakes, view failure as an opportunity to improve, and persevere by making adjustments to correct the errors which caused them to fail.
- C. Develop the skills to become more self-directed learners as they make the transition from year to year while they progress through the school system.
- D. Become actively engaged in and give their best effort to academic and co-curricular pursuits.
- E. Practice acceptable means of self-presentation through the way they dress, speak, behave, and show manners in various situations in and out of school settings.
- F. Actively support school events and functions even though they may not be an active participant in the event.
- G. Display conduct in a manner that contributes to a safe and orderly atmosphere which ensures the rights of others.
- H. Are considerate and respectful of others and the differences and diversity each person brings to the school setting, including teachers, staff, fellow students, visitors, etc.

III. CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

Our district operates on the premise that students are raised in a climate which promotes the concept that students should be educated with “a mentality of giving back to their community,” rather than getting a good education in order to get out of their community. The idea of being servant-hearted is a core principle that is continually stressed by the district as part of a value system which should be sought by all students. In addition, students are continually made aware of the place their community plays in the larger context of society, and they are encouraged to learn how their role in their local community may influence society as a whole. In such a district, civic involvement is stressed by:

- A. Incorporating objectives into lessons that require students to identify community needs and applying their learning to show an understanding of how their solutions respond to those needs.
- B. Requiring school groups and organizations to be involved in service projects which benefit the community as part of the requirement for students to maintain membership in that group.
- C. Using school time to honor community members, groups, and organizations through appreciative ceremonies, luncheons, assemblies, etc.
- D. Encouraging student groups/organizations to select needy causes within the community and using various pathways to serve those causes/needs.
- E. Incorporating lessons that require students to learn more about their local community and governmental operations in order to understand larger global concepts of societal operations.
- F. Creating models within the structure of how school organizations and groups operate based on an understanding of how local governmental bodies operate
- G. The adoption of global causes by various district organizations that may be addressed through local community outreaches.

IV. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Our district understands that the world is ever-changing, and as a result, the district must make every effort to adjust to the needs of preparing students to be successful in the 21st century as a productive citizen. The district provides students with the requisite skills needed in order to successfully advance from one grade level to the next. Additionally, a variety of electives and co-curricular activities are provided which ensure the formation of well-rounded individuals who will graduate with 21st century skills allowing them to be work force or college ready. The district articulates the intended outcomes it seeks for all of its learners, and purposely monitors each student's attainment of those outcomes through a variety of indicators. The district is purposeful in how it uses its resources in order to maximize the cost benefit for the district to achieve its purpose. In Tahoka ISD, steps are taken to ensure that the district:

- A. Addresses the needs of all learners by making data driven decisions that pinpoint weaknesses identified in student academic success across the district and implements intervention plans to address those weaknesses.
- B. Integrates technology as a means to achieve curricular outcomes.
- C. Addresses the need for student mastery of academic content in the core principles of math, science, the humanities, and the arts, while allowing for the integration of essential life skills such as leadership development, interpersonal skill development, and the effective use of communication skills.
- D. Manages its finances in a fiscally responsible manner through the development of long range plans for all district operations.
- E. Ensures personnel management techniques are in place that promote the recruitment, growth, and retention of highly qualified teachers who support the district purpose of serving the needs of students.
- F. Models the importance of lifelong learning through its commitment to ensure ongoing professional development and continuous learning for its staff members.
- G. Provides its students the opportunity to learn using 21st century tools in 21st century educational environments which are safe and orderly.

TISD VALUES

In order to achieve the vision that has been established for TISD, our behaviors must be directed at achieving the components identified in our vision of an ideal district. In essence, our district must identify actions which are non-negotiable, actions which are essential for us to turn our vision into reality.

The Tahoka ISD School Board and district administration are committed to ensuring that all students in TISD are successful in their learning, both academically and as individuals experiencing personal growth as they develop from grades PK-12. In order to meet this commitment, the district administrative body has identified the values listed below to guide its decision-making in district policies, procedures, initiatives, priorities, and daily operational decisions. Consequently, the following TISD values represent the behaviors which should be expected from Tahoka ISD in order to achieve the district vision:

- 1) TISD will develop and implement policies, procedures, and initiatives that address the needs of individual learners and require our schools to intervene when students are not successful in their learning in order to ensure that students are college and career ready upon graduation.
- 2) TISD will use collaborative methods of decision-making in the district that always puts students first and involves stakeholders both from within the district and from the community.
- 3) TISD will be involved in community efforts and outreaches that are directed at improvements for the City of Tahoka. Our district will recognize and celebrate the efforts and achievements of our partnerships with the Tahoka community.
- 4) TISD will develop and implement policies, initiatives, and procedures that stress the character development of its students through the use of positive behavior support systems allowing teaching as means for correction, as well as the consistent implementation of a discipline management plan which is fairly applied to all students.
- 5) TISD will regularly self-evaluate the overall use of district resources to achieve district goals and make necessary adjustments through the district's annual improvement plan.

TISD GOALS

The vision provides the big picture of what our district wishes to become and our behaviors are outlined in our value statements, but the ideal district can only become reality when our behaviors are focused on accomplishing goals that will continually lead the district down that visionary pathway. In alignment with the vision of the district we wish to become and the values that will get us there, Tahoka ISD must accomplish the following goals:

- 1) TISD will reduce achievement gaps and make the mastery of all required knowledge and skills attainable for every student in order to ensure the success of all students who attend our schools
- 2) TISD will strive to build relationships with all district stakeholders through outreaches which are both authentic and transparent.
- 3) TISD students will be nurtured in a climate which stresses the development of character traits which promote kindness, integrity, perseverance, and respect for others.
- 4) TISD will stress the value of student involvement in the local community to instill in them a sense of community pride and an orientation toward being servant-hearted.
- 5) TISD will utilize sound practices in finance, human resource development, and organizational management to ensure that students reach their individual potential in a safe and orderly learning environment.

TEXAS PUBLIC EDUCATION MISSION AND OBJECTIVES MISSION §4.001

The mission of the public education system of this state is to ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation.

OBJECTIVES §4.002

The objectives of public education are:

1. Parents will be full partners with educators in the education of their children.
2. Students will be encouraged and challenged to meet their full educational potential.
3. Through enhanced dropout prevention efforts, all students will remain in school until they obtain a diploma.
4. A well-balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students.
5. Educators will prepare students to be thoughtful, active citizens who have an appreciation for the basic values of our state and national heritage and who can understand and productively function in a free enterprise society.
6. Qualified and highly effective personnel will be recruited, developed, and retained.
7. Texas students will demonstrate exemplary performance in comparison to national and international standards.
8. School campuses will remain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning.
9. Educators will keep abreast of the development of creative and innovative techniques in instruction and administration using those techniques as appropriate to improve student learning.
10. Technology will be implemented and used to increase the effectiveness of student learning, instructional management, staff development, and administration.

Board of Trustees

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

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

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

Current board members include:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ● Clay Taylor- President | Tamisha Harris McClendon - Member |
| ● Drew Stone - Vice President | Slate May - Member |
| ● Lea Swinford - Secretary | Blanda Watt - Member |
| ● Jon Luna- Member | |

The board usually meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm at the Harvick Administration Building. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of

regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and at the Harvick Building at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

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

Regular Board Meeting Schedule for 2021-2022

As per BE(LOCAL) of the Tahoka ISD Board Policy Manual, regular meetings of the Board shall normally be held on the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. When determined necessary and for the convenience of Board members, the Board President may change the date, time, or location of a regular meeting with proper notice.

Administration

Superintendent- Mr. Torrey Price
HS Principal-
MS Principal- Mrs. Kelly Kieth
Elementary Principal- Mr. Donald Scott
Business Manager- Terri Anderson
Personnel/PEIMS Coordinator- Linda Lennon
4-County Co-op SPED Coordinator- Brandi Parker
Technology Coordinator- Angelica Aguirre
Maintenance Director- Joey Barrientez
Transportation Director- Sam Monsivias

School Calendar

INSERT LATER

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.

Business Office- Terri Anderson: 806-561-4105
Human Resources/Personnel- Linda Lennon: 806-561-4105
Special Education- Brandi Parker: 806-561-4538
Health Related Services- 806-561-4350
Bilingual/ESL/Gifted & Talented Services- Kaci May- 806-561-4350
Counselor –Kristi Lockaby – 806-561-4538

School Directory

**Superintendent – Torrey Price
2129 Main Street, Tahoka, TX 79373
806-561-4105**

**Tahoka High School- Principal
1925 Ave P, Tahoka, TX 79373
806-561-4538**

**Tahoka Middle School- Principal Kelly Kieth
2028 Ave P, Tahoka, TX 79373
806-561-4119**

**Tahoka Elementary School- Principal Donald Scott
1925 Ave O, Tahoka, TX 79373
806-561-4350**

Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity

Policies DAA, DIA

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

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

Job Vacancy Announcements

Policy DC

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

Employment After Retirement

Policy DC

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

Contract and Noncontract Employment

Policy DC series

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

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

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

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

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

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

Certification and Licenses

Policies DBA, DF

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to the superintendent's secretary at 806-561-4105 in a timely manner.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact the superintendent's secretary at 806-561-4105 if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

Policy CQ, DHE

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

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

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact the superintendent at 806-561-4105.

Health Safety Training

Policies DBA, DMA

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

Reassignments and Transfers

Policy DK

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

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. A teacher requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit his or her request by the end of the previous school year. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the superintendent's office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

Workload and Work Schedules

Policies DEA, DEAB, DK, DL

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

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

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees. Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. See *Overtime Compensation* on page 24 for additional information.

Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk

Policies DEA, DEAB, DG

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

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

Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications

Policies DK, DBA

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

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

public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call the superintendent's secretary at 806-561-4105.

Outside Employment and Tutoring

Policy DBD

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

Performance Evaluation

Policy DN series

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

TEACHER APPRAISAL SYSTEM

T-TESS is a process that seeks to develop habits of continuous improvement with evidence-based feedback and professional development decisions based on that feedback through ongoing dialogue and collaboration.

Components of the appraisal process, such as classroom observations and walk-throughs, will be conducted as frequently as necessary to ensure that teachers receive appropriate guidance.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND GOAL SETTING

The teacher self-assessment, goal setting, and professional development processes are all interwoven and applied throughout the school year to positively impact each teacher's professional practices and ultimately increase student performance.

Each teacher will review data and reflect on his or her professional practice, including reviewing the domains, dimensions, and descriptors of the T-TESS rubric.

A teacher who is new to the District or who is in the first year of the appraisal process will receive an orientation and will be guided through the self-assessment and goal-setting process to establish a professional development plan. Within six weeks of completing the orientation, a teacher who is new to the District or who is in the first year of the appraisal process will formulate targeted goals on the Teacher Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting Form and schedule an in-person goal-setting conference with his or her appraiser. After the conference, the teacher will submit his or her approved Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan to the appraiser.

A returning teacher will review the goal(s) and professional development plan established at the end-of-the year conference and student performance data to determine if changes are needed.

The teacher will submit to the appraiser his or her approved Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan within the first six weeks of the school year.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GOALS

Each teacher will regularly monitor progress toward his or her goals. If the teacher feels the goals need to be modified, the teacher should make an appointment with his or her appraiser to discuss individual progress toward his or her goals and/or obtain additional support.

PRE-CONFERENCE

The purpose of a pre-conference is for the appraiser and teacher to mutually discuss the upcoming formative observation with a focus on the interrelationships between planning, instruction, the learning environment, and student outcomes. The pre-conference will be conducted within 10 days of an announced observation.

The pre-conference will provide the teacher an opportunity to demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills for the planning domain and its correlating dimensions. The conference is primarily focused on the upcoming observation and what the teacher has planned to ensure that the instructional objective(s) are met.

FORMAL OBSERVATION

The teacher will be formally observed in the classroom one time unless the appraiser deems additional observations to be necessary. A classroom observation will be an instructional period or a complete lesson within an instructional period that consists of a minimum of 45 minutes of instruction.

By mutual, written consent between the appraiser and the teacher, the required minimum of 45 minutes of observation may be conducted in shorter time segments. The time segments must aggregate to at least 45 minutes.

Each teacher may have additional observations or walk-throughs that provide actionable, timely feedback, which will allow the teacher to make efficient and contextual professional development choices to help refine practice. If data gathered during the additional observation or walk-through will impact the teacher's summative appraisal rating, a written summary will be shared with the teacher within ten working days after the completion of the additional observation or walk-through.

NOTICE

The formal observation for a teacher's appraisal will be announced by date and time.

The District will establish an appraisal calendar each year (provided below), and provide the calendar to teachers within the first three weeks of the school year.

POST-CONFERENCE

All observations will include an in-person post-conference within ten working days of the observation.

The overall purpose of the post-conference is to provide a teacher an opportunity to self-reflect on the execution of his or her lesson, including the impact on student performance. The results will be used to inform and guide the teacher regarding future practices and growth.

END-OF-YEAR CONFERENCE

The end-of-year conference will be held at least 15 days prior to the last day of instruction to discuss overall performance for the year. End-of-year conferences are mandatory. Each teacher will provide his or her appraiser with an update regarding the professional goals and development plan that were developed at the beginning of the year.

PRELIMINARY GOAL SETTING AND PLANNING FOR THE FOLLOWING SCHOOL YEAR

Following the end-of-year conference, the appraiser and teacher will discuss how the current year self-assessment and goal-setting process will continue into the next school year for continuous improvement, including professional development to support learning.

SUMMATIVE ANNUAL APPRAISAL REPORT

A written summative annual appraisal report will be provided to the teacher within ten working days of the conclusion of the end-of-year conference. The report will be shared with the teacher no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction for students. The written summative annual appraisal report will be placed in the teacher's personnel file by the end of the appraisal period.

APPRAISER

Each teacher will be appraised by a certified appraiser. If the certified appraiser is not the teacher's supervisor, the appraiser will be selected from the list of certified appraisers approved by the Board.

SECOND APPRAISER

A teacher may request a second appraiser within ten working days of receiving a written observation summary or a written summative annual appraisal report. If a teacher requests a second appraisal by another certified District appraiser, the second appraiser will be determined in accordance with the following:

- The request must be submitted within 10 working days after the initial appraisal to the teacher's campus principal
- The teacher may select from any of the other certified T-TESS appraisers in the district

TEACHER RESPONSE AND REBUTTAL

A teacher may submit a written response or rebuttal within ten working days of receiving a written observation summary, a written summative annual appraisal report, or any other written documentation associated with the teacher's appraisal.

GRIEVANCES

Complaints regarding a teacher appraisal should be addressed in accordance with DGBA(LOCAL).

APPRAISAL SYSTEM — PRINCIPALS

T-PESS will be used to annually assess each principal's performance in relation to the Texas Principal Standards, which will personify continuous growth and improvement, guide self-reflection, inform professional development, and improve leadership quality.

ORIENTATION

When a principal is new to the District, a principal has never been appraised under the T-P ESS, or District policy regarding principal appraisal has changed since a principal's last orientation, the principal will receive orientation regarding the T-P ESS either prior to or in conjunction with the pre-evaluation conference.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND GOAL SETTING

The principal self-assessment and goal setting processes are interwoven and applied throughout the school year to positively impact each principal's professional practices and ultimately increase academic growth. The self-assessment provides the basis for establishing professional growth goals. The principal will set manageable, meaningful, and measurable performance goals that typically focus on the campus improvement plan, a district strategic priority, or efforts to improve a specific leadership practice or competency. In establishing goals, returning principals will review the goals and professional development plan established at the previous year's end-of-year conference.

Evidence and documentation gathered by the principal should provide a basis for self-assessment, goal setting, professional development planning, and demonstration of performance on specific standards.

An appraisal calendar will be given to the principal prior to the pre-evaluation conference.

PRE-EVALUATION CONFERENCE

Each principal will submit his or her proposed goals to the principal's appraiser prior to the pre-evaluation conference.

The pre-evaluation conference will include a discussion regarding performance improvement, leadership effectiveness, and strategies to improve school productivity and student outcomes. The pre-evaluation conference provides the opportunity for the appraiser and the principal to discuss critical topics including the principal's completed self-assessment and one to three goals aligned to the campus improvement plan and District priorities. The principal and the appraiser will agree on the data, evidence, and documentation applicable to the principal's goals. Data collection will happen throughout the evaluation cycle.

Following the pre-evaluation conference, the principal will submit final goals to the appraiser.

MIDYEAR CONFERENCE

The midyear evaluation meeting will help the principal determine and discuss progress toward the attainment of his or her goals. At the meeting, evidence will be reviewed that is related directly to the goals. If applicable, discussion and identification of additional supports will be discussed. Adjustments to the goal setting form will be made if data, artifacts, and other evidence suggest that adjustments need to be made.

The meeting will include a review of the principal evaluation rubric and completion of the midyear progress form. The principal will be able to attach comments to the midyear progress form.

END-OF-YEAR PERFORMANCE CONFERENCE

Prior to the end-of-year performance conference, the principal will provide to his or her appraiser a consolidated performance assessment, consisting of a brief summary of artifacts and data related to the indicators and attainment of goals.

The end-of-year performance conference will include review of the self-assessment; the consolidated performance assessment; the appraiser's summary ratings; and, if applicable, student growth or progress measures.

Potential goals and professional development activities for the following year will be identified. If time permits and the appraiser and principal agree on the final performance ratings and attainment of goals, then, the final evaluation and goal setting may be completed at the end-of-year performance conference. If final ratings and goal attainment are not completed, the appraiser will schedule a final evaluation and goal-setting meeting for a later date.

FINAL EVALUATION GOAL SETTING

At the final evaluation and goal-setting meeting, the principal and evaluator will review and discuss any additional information that may be relevant to fairly and accurately assign final performance ratings, draft performance goals, and discuss recommendations and support for performance improvement for the subsequent year based on the current year results.

The appraiser and principal will sign and submit all required forms. The written summative annual appraisal report shall be placed in the principal's personnel file by the end of the appraisal period.

GRIEVANCES

Complaints regarding principal appraisal or the appraisal of another administrator shall be addressed in accordance with DGBA(LOCAL).

Employee Involvement

Policies BQA, BQB

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

Staff Development

Policy DMA

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

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

Compensation and Benefits

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as non-exempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See *Overtime Compensation*, page 24.)

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

Employees should contact the business manager at 806-561-4105 for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

Paychecks

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

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

Automatic Payroll Deposit

All employees will have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of 10 days is necessary to activate this service. Contact the business manager in the business office for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Payroll Deductions

Policy CFEA

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

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

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for health, dental, life, and vision insurance; annuities; and higher education savings plans. Employees also may request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations, the Texas Tomorrow Constitutional Trust Fund, and savings deposits and loan payments through the Lynn Co Federal Credit Union. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Overtime Compensation

Policy DEAB

The district compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. Only nonexempt employees (hourly employees and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. **Nonexempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor.**

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:01 am Sunday and ends at midnight Saturday. **Employees who must work over 40 hours in a work week must receive prior approval from their supervisor.**

Employees may be compensated for overtime at time-and-a-half rate, compensatory time off (comp time), or direct pay. If an employee has a balance of more than 60 hours of overtime, the employee will be required to take compensatory time or, at the District's option, will receive overtime pay. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 hours of comp time.
- Comp time must be used in the duty year that it is earned.
- Use of comp time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval, as workload permits, or at the supervisor's direction.
- An employee may be required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

Policy DEE

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor and the district's business office 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.

A travel request must be submitted to the Transportation Department. Request forms may be found in the TISD website through *Eduphoria!* Please turn in your request at least one week in advance.

Credit and fuel cards will be issued by the school business office to pay hotel reservations and fuel bills. The transportation department will have fuel cards.

Meals Expense

Meals are not considered a reimbursable travel expense unless the trip requires an overnight-stay or if the meal is part of the registration fee for the meeting attended. A credit card will be issued for meals and all receipts must be turned in to the business office upon return of the employee. If a credit card is not available for issue, employees may receive a *per diem* for meals for a trip. Again, receipts for meals must be turned in for meals on the trip. Any meal money remaining **must be returned** to the business office. Tips are at the employee's expense.

Travel Arrangements

The method of travel for employees on school business will be determined by the transportation department and business office. Air travel approval and/or reimbursement will be based on distance, number attending, available air fare, etc.

Room accommodations must be economical and reasonable as determined by the District prior to the trip. The following information must be provided before trip approval can be granted: name of hotel, cost per night, and if reservations have been made. **Receipts for all travel expenditures must be turn in** at the school business office after the travel is completed. All school credit cards and keys to the school vehicles must be returned as soon as possible upon return to the District.

Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

Policy CRD

***Districts with insurance coverage through TRS-ActiveCare
should select the first three paragraphs:***

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

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

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

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each year. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact the business manager in the business office for more information.

***Districts with insurance coverage through entities other than
TRS-ActiveCare should select the following paragraphs.***

Group health insurance coverage is available to all TISD employees. The district's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the board of trustees. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, prices, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet during the open enrollment period.

The health insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. New employees must complete enrollment forms within the first 30 days of employment. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage prior to the start of the school year. Employees should contact the business manager at 806-561-4105 for more information.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for dental, supplemental life, catastrophic illness and disability. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction.

Employees should contact the business manager at 806-561-4105 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 Texas Association of School Boards, effective September 1, 2016.

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

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the employee supervisor. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. See *Workers' Compensation Benefits*, page 37 for information on use of paid leave for such absences.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance

Policy CRF

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have employment contracts or reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact the business manager at 806-561-4105.

Teacher Retirement

Policy DEG

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the business manager at 806-561-4105 as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web (www.trs.texas.gov).

Leaves and Absences

Policies DEC, DECA, DECB

ABSENCES

ABSENT FROM DUTY/SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

District policy requires each employee who must be absent from duty to complete and sign an “**Absent from Duty**” report. Please submit the yellow form to the principal for approval. It is the teacher’s responsibility to complete the report and make sure that it is accurate. These records are critical in the accumulation of sick days, etc. See individual campus principals for information to obtain absence from duty forms.

Faculty Absences – Our progress and success with our students demand that we are in attendance daily in order to achieve maximum contact time with our students. Please make every effort to be at school daily and promptly. Should you need to be absent from school, contact the campus secretary to ensure that we are able to secure a substitute for your position. Custodial, maintenance and grounds employees will need to call their immediate supervisor.

If an employee must leave a building for a brief period of time, arrangements should be made through the building principal. Good common sense shall prevail in all situations of employees leaving a campus.

ABSENCE FROM DUTY FORMS

An employee who is absent from duty must fill out the proper forms immediately upon returning to duty to the campus secretary regardless of whether a substitute is secured for the absence or not. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that all forms are turned in. The ABSENCE FORM DUTY FORMS need to be turned in on the 5th of each month to the Central Office (superintendent’s secretary) by campus secretaries . Forms must be signed and dated by supervisor/principal and the employee.

ATTENDANCE (Faculty)

Classroom Emergencies: Teachers are expected to remain in their assigned classes at all times. In emergencies requiring you to leave the classroom or campus immediately, consult your campus administrator (or neighboring teacher or secretary if unable to reach your principal) first.

Class coverage not requiring a substitute:

Minor emergencies / situations may occur that require a teacher to miss a time frame of 2 hours or less. Teachers need to be proactive in attempting to find coverage for their class/classes during the absence (final approval must come from your campus administrator - coverage must be by a Tahoka ISD employee). If a teacher is required to miss more than 2 hours, then the teacher is required to obtain a substitute that counts against their state/local days. Teachers will have up to 5 total instances where this may occur; however, times which exceed that amount will be deducted from the teacher’s local days as an absence.

Planning Period

- This is a period for preparation of lessons, grading, contacting parents and other school-related clerical duties. This is not a time to leave campus to attend to personal business.
- When a conference is requested with a teacher, it will be scheduled at the convenience of all involved parties. Teachers are responsible for scheduling parent conferences. In cases

where the conference is going to require that an administrator be present, please make those arrangements with your administrator prior to the conference being set up.

- Our progress and success with our students demand that we are in attendance daily.

Please make every effort to be at school daily and promptly.

- You should not leave campus without notifying an administrator or campus secretary when your principal is unavailable (lunches are an exception).

Emergency Substitute Folder- this is used in cases of emergency and should be maintained and updated as necessary (primarily adjusted after it has been used for one emergency already). This should be completed and turned in to your campus principal within the first 3 weeks of school. If an emergency arises, the substitute packet will be used as a backup to assist the teacher.

It should contain at least the following items:

- Current class procedures
- Class rolls & teacher schedule
- Seating charts
- Classroom intervention plan
- Office Referrals
- Hall Passes

At least one assignment that requires student work time. (These assignments should occupy the student's time while additionally being relevant to their success in that class. This is done with the understanding that the emergency sub is not expected to know your subject material and will not be prepared to teach a complete lesson)

Having a substitute in the classroom is always a challenging situation. Train students in the importance of being courteous and absolutely cooperative with the adult in charge. Make sure that explicit instructions are left for the substitute. When you are able to plan for an absence, leave detailed lesson plans, as well as at least the items above (less the emergency plans) in a location easily accessible for the substitute or with the campus office personnel. This packet will be given to the substitute at morning check-in. If you have a concern about a substitute that we used due to reports you received upon your return, please notify your principal of those concerns. A document will be provided to remove the sub from our list if the situation warrants it. In case no substitute is present for a teacher, teachers with available off periods or aides may be used to cover the situation.

The district offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence. Employees who expect to be absent for an extended period of more than five days should call the business manager at 806-561-4105 for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums, and requirements for communicating with the district.

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

- Local
- State Sick (earned through 5/31/95)

- State Personal
- Extended Sick Leave (Medical Certification necessary and may not be used until all other available leave is depleted)

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

Loss of Pay for Absences. An employee will be docked their daily rate of pay for each day of absence from duty that is used above the accumulated Local Leave, State Sick Leave and State Personal Leave.

For absence from duty beyond the accumulated sick leave and/or personal leave, full pay will be deducted figured as total salary divided by the number of days employed.

Substitute pay for certified teacher employees will be \$85.00 per day or \$42.50 for half day.

Substitute pay for non-certified teachers employees will be \$75.00 per day or \$37.50 for half day.

Long-term substitute pay for all substitute employees will be \$100.00 per day, beginning on the 11th day of substituting.

Substitute pay for all hourly employees will be equal to the minimum wage as defined by the Minimum Wage Law.

Leaves

Medical Certification. Any employee who is absent more than 5 consecutive days because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and—in the case of personal illness—the employee’s fitness to return to work.

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) prohibits covered employers from requesting or requiring genetic information of an individual or family member of the individual, except as specifically allowed by this law. To comply with this law, we ask that employees and health care providers do not provide any genetic information in any medical certification. ‘Genetic information,’ as defined by GINA, includes an individual’s family medical history, the results of an individual’s or family member’s genetic tests, the fact that an individual or an individual’s family member sought or received genetic services, and genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or an individual’s family member or an embryo lawfully held by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services.

Continuation of Health Insurance. Employees on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under the Family and

Medical Leave Act will be paid by the district as they were prior to the leave. Otherwise, the district does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave. Under TRS-Active Care rules, an employee is no longer eligible for insurance through the district after six months of unpaid leave other than FML. If an employee's unpaid leave extends for more than six months, the district will provide the employee with notice of COBRA rights.

Personal Leave

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

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

Discretionary. Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor 3 days in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor.

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

State Sick Leave

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State sick leave can be used only in 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.

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

- Employee illness
- Illness in the employee's immediate family

- Family emergency (i.e., natural disasters or life-threatening situations)
- Death in the immediate family
- Active military service

Local Leave

Each full time employee will earn days of leave for personal and business reasons without loss of full pay during each school year. An employee may earn Local Leave each year as follows: Three (3) days per year but not to exceed nine (9) days in three (3) years' time.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—General Provisions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Benefits and Protections. During FML, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FML, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave.

Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FML was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

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

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

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

Enforcement. An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

The FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

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

For additional information:

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

Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions

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

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

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

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

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

Temporary Disability Leave

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

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

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

When an employee is ready to return to work, the employee's supervisor and the district business office should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to resume regular duties. Certified employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned if an appropriate position is available. If an appropriate position is not available, the employee may be assigned to another campus, subject to the approval of the campus principal. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, the employee will be reinstated to a position at the original campus at the beginning of the following school year.

Workers' Compensation Benefits

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

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

Assault Leave

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

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

Bereavement Leave

Jury Duty

An employee shall be granted leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave when called for jury duty. The employee shall be required to present documentation of the service and shall be allowed to retain any compensation for this service. When a substitute is required, the District will be responsible for paying the substitute. **However, if an employee is released from jury selection prior to the noon hour, they must return to their campus and present the selection receipt upon their return.**

If the employee does not return to the campus and was released before 12:00 p.m. from jury duty, the employee will be docked for ½ day of personal leave.

The District may not discharge, discipline, or penalize in any manner an employee because the employee complies 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 shall be deducted from the employee's personal leave or shall be taken by the employee as leave without pay. Employees must present documentation of the service and may keep any compensation they receive.

Other Court Appearances

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

Military Leave

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

Reemployment after Military Leave. Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment within the time specified by law to Tahoka ISD. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years.

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

Employee Relations and Communications

Employee Recognition and Appreciation

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

District Communications

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

Complaints and Grievances

Policy DGBA

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

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

In this policy, the terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning. Employee complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies listed below. Some of these policies require appeals to be submitted in accordance with DGBA after the relevant complaint process:

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

The District shall inform employees of this policy through appropriate District publications.

The Board encourages employees to discuss their concerns with their supervisor, principal, or other appropriate administrator who has the authority to address the concerns. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal resolution shall be encouraged but shall not extend any deadlines in this policy, except by mutual written consent.

Employees shall not be prohibited from communicating with a member of the

Board regarding District operations except when communication between an employee and a Board member would be inappropriate because of a pending hearing or appeal related to the employee.

An employee 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.

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

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

Complaints alleging a violation of law by a supervisor may be made to the Superintendent or designee.

Complaint forms alleging a violation of law by the Superintendent may be submitted directly to the Board or designee. Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication, including email and fax, or by 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. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

The District shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If the employee fails to appear at a scheduled conference, the District may hold the conference and issue a decision in the employee’s absence.

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

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

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

The employee may designate a representative through written notice to the District

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

Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. Employees shall not file 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.

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

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

Complaints and appeals under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District.

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

A complaint or appeal form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be refiled with all the required information if the refiling is within the designated time for filing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Level Two record shall include: 1. The Level One record. 2. The notice of appeal from Level One to Level Two. 3. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments. 4. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level Two, except that if at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the employee notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.

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

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

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

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board does not make a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

Employee Conduct and Welfare

Standards of Conduct

Policy DH

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

- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action.
- Know and comply with department and district policies and procedures.
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use district time, funds, and property for authorized district business and activities only.

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the superintendent knew of the incident. See *Reports to the Texas Education Agency*, page 67 for additional information.

DRESS CODE (FACULTY)

Appearance many times dictates the attitude of other people, including students, parents and other employees toward school employees. At Tahoka ISD, our outlook with regard to the appearance of its employees will be as follows:

1. Employees are discouraged from wearing denim type pants unless in the shop or labs. Potential problems could arise when employees dress in the same style or fashion as students. There are many more styles and types of clothing more appropriate for wear by employees. Regular blue jeans (Levis, American Eagle, Lee, Wrangler, etc.) should not be worn in a regular classroom situation on a regular basis. Fridays and official STAAR Testing days are the days set aside for teachers to wear jeans (without holes).
2. Sweat suits or warm-up type clothing is not permissible in any class setting except physical education classes only.
3. No type of head covering, cap or hat, is to be worn while in any part of the school building during normal school operational hours.

4. Please refrain from wearing flip flops to school as it is not viewed as dress that gives the appearance of professionalism.
5. Coaches should not wear shorts in the main building.
6. Facial hair for employees shall be limited to an upper-lip mustache and/or facial hair confined to the area on and around the chin. All facial hair should be kept neat, short, trimmed and should be considered appropriate by the supervisor of the employee. Any facial hair determined to be inappropriate by the immediate supervisor must be immediately corrected in order to continue employment. Decision of the immediate supervisor on any facial hair determined inappropriate shall be considered final.
7. Male employees may not wear earrings or any other foreign objects in the ear unless prescribed by a physician. Employees may not wear facial studs, facial rings, or tongue bars. Body piercing must not be visible.

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

Texas Educators' Code of Ethics

Statement of Purpose

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

Professional Standards

1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

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

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

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

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

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

parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Policies DH, DIA

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

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

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

Insert text of DIA (Local) here or link to Policy On Line.

Harassment of Students

Policies DH, DHB, FFG, FFH

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. See *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*, page 52 and *Bullying*, page 71 for additional information.

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

"Solicitation of a romantic relationship" means deliberate or repeated acts that can be reasonably interpreted as the solicitation by an educator of a relationship with a student that is romantic in nature. A romantic relationship is often characterized by a strong emotional or sexual attachment and/or patterns of exclusivity, but does not include appropriate educator-student relationships that arise out of legitimate contexts such as familial connections or longtime acquaintance. The following acts, considered in context, may constitute prima facie evidence of the solicitation by an educator of a romantic relationship with a student:

1. Behavior, gestures, expressions, or communications with a student that are unrelated to the educator's job duties and evidence a romantic intent or interest in the student, including statements of love, affection, or attraction. Factors that may be considered in determining the romantic intent of such communications or behavior include:
 - a. The nature of the communications;
 - b. The timing of the communications;
 - c. The extent of the communications;
 - d. Whether the communications were made openly or secretly;
 - e. The extent that the educator attempts to conceal the communications;
 - f. If the educator claims to be counseling a student, SBEC may consider whether the educator's job duties included counseling, whether the educator reported the subject of the counseling to the student's guardians or to the appropriate school personnel, or, in the case of alleged abuse or neglect, whether the educator reported the abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities; and
 - g. Any other evidence tending to show the context of the communications between educator and student.
2. Making inappropriate comments about a student's body, creating or transmitting sexually suggestive photographs or images, or encouraging the student to transmit sexually suggestive photographs or images.
3. Making sexually demeaning comments to a student.
4. Making comments about a student's potential sexual performance.
5. Requesting details of a student's sexual history.

6. Requesting a date, sexual contact, or any activity intended for the sexual gratification of the educator.
7. Engaging in conversations regarding the sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party.
8. Inappropriate hugging, kissing, or excessive touching.
9. Providing the student with drugs or alcohol.
10. Suggestions that a romantic relationship is desired after the student graduates, including post-graduation plans for dating or marriage.
11. Any other acts tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with the student.

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

1. A District employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
2. The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:
 - a. Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities; or
 - b. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and District employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a District employee is always prohibited, even if consensual. [See DH]

Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed in this policy and take any other steps required by this policy. For the purposes of this policy, District officials refer to the superintendent who functions as the district's Title IX coordinator and the ADA/Section 504 coordinator.

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

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

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

Upon receipt or notice of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the District shall immediately undertake an investigation, except as provided below at CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION.

If the District official determines that the allegations, if proven, would not constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy, the District official shall refer the complaint for consideration under FFI.

If appropriate and regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the alleged conduct is pending, the District shall promptly take interim action calculated to address prohibited conduct or bullying prior to the completion of the District's investigation.

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

If a law enforcement or regulatory agency notifies the District that a criminal or regulatory investigation has been initiated, the District shall confer with the agency to determine if the District investigation would impede the criminal or regulatory investigation. The District shall proceed with its investigation only to the extent that it does not impede the ongoing criminal or regulatory investigation. After the law enforcement or regulatory agency has finished gathering its evidence, the District shall promptly resume its investigation.

Absent extenuating circumstances, such as a request by a law enforcement or regulatory agency for the District to delay its investigation, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the report; however, the investigator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether prohibited conduct or bullying occurred. The report shall be filed with the District official overseeing the investigation.

Notification of the outcome of the investigation shall be provided to both parties in compliance with FERPA.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Policies DG, DH, DHB, FFG, GRA

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Abuse is defined by SBEC and includes the following acts or omissions:

- Mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Physical injury that results in substantial harm to a student or minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the student or minor, including an injury that

- is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline; or
- Sexual conduct harmful to a student's or minor's mental, emotional, or physical welfare.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children through district staff development requirements that inform employees of the signs and dangers of child maltreatment. As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

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

Reporting Crime

Policy DG

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

Technology Resources

Policy CQ

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

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

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

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

Personal Use of Electronic Media

Policy DH

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

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

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

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

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

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

Use of Electronic Media with Students

Policy DH

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The employee may use any form of electronic media **except** text messaging. Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility. An employee who communicates with a student using text messaging shall comply with the following protocol:
 - The employee shall include at least one of the student's parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message;
 - The employee shall include his or her immediate supervisor as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and supervisor receive the same message; or
 - For each text message addressed to one or more students, the employee shall send a copy of the text message to the employee's district e-mail address.
- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page ("professional page") for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee's professional page.

- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics including:
 - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
 - Copyright law [Policy CY]
 - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DHB]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with one or more currently-enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

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

Criminal History Background Checks

Policy DBAA

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

Employee Arrests and Convictions

Policy DH

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

- Crimes involving school property or funds
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity

- Crimes involving moral turpitude

Moral turpitude includes the following:

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

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

Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention

Policies DH, DI

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

Insert information on alcohol and drug abuse in DH (Local) and DI (Exhibit) here or link to Policy On Line.

Tobacco Products and E-Cigarette Use

Policies DH, FNCD GKA

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

Fraud and Financial Impropriety

Policy CAA

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

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

Conflict of Interest

Policy CB, DBD

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

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

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

Gifts and Favors

Policy DBD

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

Copyrighted Materials

Policy CY

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

Associations and Political Activities

Policy DGA

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

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

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

Charitable Contributions

Policy DG

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

Safety

Policy CK series

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

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

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

Possession of Firearms and Weapons

Policies FNCG, GKA

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisor or call the District Officer immediately at 806-759-4538.

Visitors in the Workplace

Policy GKC

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

Asbestos Management Plan

Policy CKA

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

Pest Control Treatment

Policies CLB, DI

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

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

General Procedures

Bad Weather Closing

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

Emergencies

Policies CKC, CKD

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

Purchasing Procedures

Policy CH

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. When making an authorized purchase with a district credit card, if there are any issues with the credit card, contact the business office before using personal funds to cover charges. Contact the business manager 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 if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. The form to process a change in personal information can be obtained from Linda Lennon in Central Office @ 806-561-4105.

Personnel Records

Policy DBA, GBA

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

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

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

Building Use

Policies DGA, GKD

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The superintendent's secretary is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the superintendent's secretary to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

Termination of Employment

Resignations

Policy DFE

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

The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the acts listed in *Reports to the Texas Education Agency* on page 67.

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

Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

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

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

Dismissal of Noncontract Employees

Policy DCD

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

Exit Interviews and Procedures

Policies DC and CY

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

Reports to Texas Education Agency

Policy DF, DHB

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

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

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

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

Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

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

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

Student Issues

Equal Educational Opportunities

Policies FB, FFH

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students based on any of the reasons listed above should be directed to the superintendent.

Student Records

Policy FL

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

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

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

Parent and Student Complaints

Policy FNG

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

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

Administering Medication to Students

Policy FFAC

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

Dietary Supplements

Policies DH, FFAC

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

Psychotropic Drugs

Policy FFAC

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

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

- Recommending that a student use a psychotropic drug
- Suggesting a particular diagnosis

- Excluding from class or school-related activity a student whose parent refuses to consent to a psychiatric evaluation or to authorize the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student

Student Conduct and Discipline

Policies in the FN series and FO series

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

Student Attendance

Policy FEB

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the district's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require minor students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student upon returning to school, must submit an excuse to the main campus office prior to attending class. These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the student handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

Bullying

Policy FFI

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

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the District and that:

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

This conduct is considered bullying if it:

1. Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
2. Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

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

To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee.

Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.

A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.

The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.

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

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.

If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.

Hazing

Policy FNCC

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

INSTRUCTION

TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION:

(Report time: 7:40 am – 4:00 pm)

Educational Planning:

Follow state standards -TEKS

Follow TRS and district standards with particular focus of YAG

Begin with the end in mind; know what the students will be assessed on and align your lessons so that you are requiring them to show proficiency on that skill set

Plan with a “Conceptual Lens” where you tie your content to fall under large umbrellas of related material so that students can easily scaffold their learning

Complete lesson plans--submitted WEEKLY in Forethought by Friday at 4pm prior to the instructional week

Complete grade/progress reporting in timely fashion

Grades should be entered weekly so that parents can access their child’s current progress in your class

Document and follow up on student progress

Practice the use of socially acceptable behavior through district dress code, appropriate speech, and ethical actions

Instruction:

Have a solid knowledge of your subject matter and be able to make it relevant to the students (by use in other disciplines or their own experiences)

Use various assessment strategies to monitor ongoing student achievement and adjust as needed to ensure student success

Maintain high expectations for all students

Develop challenging, clear, and engaging lessons and assignments that require higher cognitive skills

Use various teaching intervention strategies to enhance student success in the classroom and on STAAR tests by addressing the varied needs of all learners

Ensure that the written, taught, and tested curriculum in your class is aligned!

Enhance success in the classroom/Maintain inclusive, rigorous learning environment

Ensure the implementation of all students’ IEPs/504 plans in the least restrictive environment to the extent possible

Effective use of Oral/Written Communication

Use available technology to enhance to student’s learning experience

Bell to bell learning; gaps in student engagement lead to discipline issues

Classroom Management / Intervention:

Create/develop a positive classroom climate

Develop/maintain good rapport with students (**students move from being compliant in class to being committed to the leadership in class if they have a relationship with the teacher**)

Maintain documentation / records of all textbooks and teacher materials

Maintain control and handle routine discipline problems

Develop classroom rules and procedures that are conducive to a good learning environment

Maintain class rules and procedures that encourage growth, maturity, and a sense of responsibility in students

Implement the Classroom Outcomes Plan for discipline and tardies to remain firm, fair and consistent for non-severe issues

Human Relations:

Teacher – Student

The teacher:

1. is consistently fair and impartial; bases praise and criticism on fact .(Criticism of behavior is constructive; individual students are not excessively criticized; confidence of student is maintained)
2. sets an example of socially acceptable behavior for students in the school
3. conferences with student regarding academic/behavioral concerns
4. does not take student behavior personally, understands that all behavior is learned behavior, thereby, leaving room for the teaching/learning of new behaviors

Teacher - Teacher

The teacher:

1. observes and exhibits a professional and positive attitude toward his / her position and that of colleagues
2. observes the Code of Ethics regarding confidential information and expects other do so.
3. views their colleague as a valuable source for learning new teaching strategies and classroom management techniques

Teacher - Supervisor

The teacher:

1. meets and holds classes according to the assignments in the master schedule (Any departure from the assignment must be approved by an administrator)
2. accepts responsibilities and duties assigned by supervisor in a professional manner
3. accepts responsibility for the performance of his/her class
4. will take up disagreements in private, but will publicly support decisions made by superiors

Teacher - Community

The teacher:

1. communicates with parents about their children both academically and behaviorally
2. works cooperatively with parents and administration trying to understand their problems and points of view
3. encourages participation in all the happenings of the school

Failing Students

Each teacher should give careful attention to the problem of pupils who are not doing satisfactory work.

Intervention strategies to identify and remediate issues are critical. Problem students should be discussed with the school counselor.

The giving of failing grades excessively, used only as a crutch or challenge, cannot do much to raise the standard of work in a class. It is possible that the issuance of 20% to 30% F's does more harm than good in most cases. The national average of failures ranges from 5% to 12%. When the percentage exceeds this maximum, it should act as a challenge and indicate a need for the teacher to look for the following things:

1. Are your standards higher than the ability of your students?
 2. Re-evaluate your methods and techniques
 3. Allow for individual differences and needs or additional study
 4. Compare your tests and standards with other teachers
 5. Be certain that your tests are an accurate measurement of what you have taught.
- Education Code 13.904(a); 16.056(d); TAC 105.251; 19TAC 121.1

GRADING GUIDELINES

Effective teachers.....

take enough grades to form a true picture of a student's mastery of educational objectives.

employ a grading policy which fairly considers class work, test grades, and multiple alternative methods of assessing student progress and mastery.

use formative and summative evaluation. A student should be graded several times during the phases of a unit or a large project rather than just giving one grade at the end.

make sure that students know in advance what objectives will be covered on any test. The purpose of testing is to determine to what degree a student has mastered course objectives.

grade assignments as they are turned in rather than waiting to grade during the ninth week. Each student and parent deserves to know how a student is progressing during every week of a six-weeks period.

evaluate students during the entire nine-week period. The district urges teachers not to 'close out' grade books prior to the end of the six-weeks period. Effective teachers avoid giving six weeks and/or semester grades of 69.

make an effort to notify parents if a teacher does not send a progress report at the three-weeks period and a student's grade drops below failing in the fourth week or after.

do not deduct points for improper heading, type of writing instrument, or other mistakes that relate to classroom procedure. According to state law, grades are to be based on mastering educational objectives.

do not give extra credit to students for bringing purchased items to school. If additional opportunities for extra credit are offered to students, the opportunities should reflect academic value.

understand the importance of open communication with parents and make an effort to communicate with parents on a regular basis.

recognize that zeroes do not show how much a student has or has not learned and do not teach a student responsibility.

ensure that every assignment is relevant, meaningful, and a reflection of the students' mastery of the TEKS

CURRICULUM MASTERY

Promotion and course credit shall be based on mastery of the curriculum.* **Assignments, tests, projects, classroom activities, and other instructional activities shall be designed so that the student's performance indicates the level of mastery of the designated District objectives [EIA (LOCAL)].** The student's mastery level shall be a major factor in determining the grade for a subject or course.

**The curriculum is the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) plus district curriculum alignments and Scope and Sequences. (SBOE TAC 74.1)*

STANDARDS FOR MASTERY

Mastery shall be determined as follows:

1. Course assignments and unit evaluation shall be given to determine student grades in a subject. An average of 70 or higher shall be considered a passing grade. [EIE (LOCAL)]
2. **Mastery of the skills (TEKS) necessary for success at the next level shall be validated by** assessments that may either be incorporated into unit or final exams, or may be administered separately. Mastery of at least 70 percent of the objectives shall be required. [EIE (LOCAL)]

All grades should be based on mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Grades reflect mastery of course TEKS that teachers have taught. [For example: The use of an independent computer-based program available for teacher usage not based on TEKS and not meant for direct instruction should be used as a reward program, not for grades.]

Noncompliance with established classroom procedures shall not be reflected in a student's academic grade. (For example: Improper or incomplete headings should not result in grade penalties or point deductions. This is a 'work habits or failure to follow directions' issue, not an academic issue.). Teachers will be required to issue Citizenship grades for students. Separate and apart from the academic performance of the students, this gives the teachers an avenue to communicate behavior grades to parents. Letter grades should be used to communicate citizenship grades with the following categories: E=excellent; S=Satisfactory; N=Needs Improvement; and U=Unsatisfactory. Students should receive neither an "N" nor "U" on their report cards without parents being contacted previously by that teacher.

Criteria for Promotion/Retention:

A student may be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the subject matter of the course or grade level. [TEC 28.021 (a)]

The award of credit for a course affirms that a student has satisfactorily met all state and local requirements. Course credit shall be awarded according to this policy. [19 TAC 74.26 (a)]

Expectations and standards for promotion shall be established for each grade level, content area, and course and shall be coordinated with compensatory, intensive, and/or accelerated services. [See EHBC] The District shall comply with applicable state and federal requirements when determining methods for students with disabilities [see FB] or students who are English language learners [see EHBE and EKBA] to demonstrate mastery of the curriculum.

Any modified promotion standards for a student receiving special education services shall be determined by the student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee and documented in the student's individualized education program (IEP). [See EHBA series and EKB]

Kindergarten:

A kindergarten student may be retained based on the following criteria:

Kindergarten progress report (checklist of skills).

Chronological age and observed social and emotional development of the student.

A parent's request that the student be retained.

The teacher's, principal's, and student success team's recommendation for retention.

Other criteria deemed appropriate by the principal, including, but not limited to, assessments used by the District for measuring basic skills, and/or competency in early literacy and early numeracy.

The criteria shall be reviewed by a committee consisting of the student's classroom teacher, an administrator, the student success team, and the parent(s).

Grades 1-2:

In grades 1–2, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of **70 or above in language arts and mathematics**.

In an effort to emphasize the importance of literacy at foundational ages, the language arts composite is calculated as follows: Reading = 50%

English/Language = 25%

Spelling = 25%

Grades 3-8:

In grades 3–8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of **70 or above in three of the following areas: language arts, reading, mathematics, science, and social studies**.

Grades 9-12:

Grade-level advancement for students in grades 9–12 shall be earned by course credits. [See EIE (Local)]

STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE (SSI)

In addition to local standards for mastery and promotion, students in grades 5 and 8 must meet the passing standard established by the State Board on an applicable assessment instrument in the subjects required under state law in order to be promoted to the next grade. [EIE (LOCAL)]

Grade Reporting to Parents

The district shall issue grades reports/report cards every 9 weeks. EIE (LOCAL)

PK & Kindergarten: Achievement in PK/kindergarten shall be reported with ratings which indicate the students are meeting expectations, progressing, or experiencing difficulties as well as mastery or non-mastery of the items on the report card.

Grades 1-12: Achievement will be reported in numerical grades with 70 considered the level of passing.

Guidelines for Grading

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that each campus or instructional level develops guidelines for teachers to follow in determining grades for students. These guidelines shall ensure that grading reflects a student's relative mastery of an assignment and that a sufficient number of grades are taken to support the average grade assigned.

Guidelines for grading shall be clearly communicated to students and parents. [EIA (LOCAL)]

The district shall permit a student who meets the criteria detailed in the grading guidelines a reasonable opportunity to redo an assignment or retake a test for which the student received a failing grade. [EIA (LOCAL)]

Academic Dishonesty

Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to disciplinary penalties and grade penalties on assignments or tests. Academic dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or other supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students. [EIA (LOCAL)]

Grading Categories

Tahoka ISD will utilize two classifications of grades which will be taken by teachers: 1) Classwork 2) Assessments. The weight of each of these categories in determining student averages will be determined by the grade level and class level taught by the teacher.

Number of Grades/Requirements:

- At least two grades per week must be posted for “Classwork” category (labs/quizzes/homework/classwork)
- At least three grades total in the “Assessments” category (tests/essays/presentations/projects/research) per each 9 week period.
- The teacher shall provide appropriate documentation as required by the administration for grades recorded. Grades recorded in the teacher gradebook and appropriate documentation shall be used in conferring with students and parents. **If a teacher records a grade lower than 50 on the report card, documentation of parent contacts and the interventions provided for a student must be available.**

COMPUTING AVERAGES FOR SIX-WEEK GRADES

Elementary School:

Nine-week grades shall be determined by averaging grades in each subject area. Classwork, assessments, projects, etc., carry equal weight in Pre-K-2nd grade. For 3rd-5th grades assessments count for 40% and classwork/homework count for 60% of the final grade.

Middle School Grades 6-8:

Nine-week grades shall be determined by averaging grades in two categories for all subject areas. A minimum of twelve (12) graded assignments shall be taken in the “classwork” category and a minimum of two (2) graded assignments shall be taken in the “assessments” category per grading period. Each assignment is only one (1) graded assignment in a category and can be weighted no more than three (3) times in the calculation of the six weeks average.

Categories and Percentages

- 70% Classwork (labs/quizzes/homework/classwork)
- 30% Assessments (tests/essays/presentations/projects/research)

High School Grades 9-12:

Nine-week grades shall be determined by averaging grades in two categories for all subject areas. A minimum of twelve (18) graded assignments shall be taken in the “classwork” category and a minimum of two (2) graded assignments shall be taken in the “assessments” category per grading period. Each assignment is only one (1) graded assignment in a category and can be weighted no more than three (3) times in the calculation of the six weeks average.

Categories and Percentages

- **Regular**
 - 60% Classwork (labs/quizzes/homework/classwork)
 - 40% Assessments (tests/essays/presentations/projects/research)
- **Honors**
 - 50% (labs/quizzes/homework/classwork)
 - 50% Assessments (tests/essays/presentations/projects/research)

Computing Semester/Yearly Averages:

Elementary: Semester Grade= (1st 9 weeks average + 2nd 9 weeks avg + 3rd 9 weeks avg)/3

Yearly Average= (Semester 1 avg + Semester 2 avg)/2

Middle School: Semester Grade= 1st 9 weeks =30% , 2nd 9 weeks =30%, 3rd 9 weeks =30%, Sem exam = 10%

Yearly Average= (Semester 1 avg+Semester 2 avg)/2

High School: Semester Average=1st 9 weeks =30% , 2nd 9 weeks =30%, 3rd 9 weeks =30%, Sem exam = 10%

Yearly Average= (Semester 1 avg+Semester 2 avg)/2

GRADING PRACTICES

High Failure Rates

Teachers should evaluate the effectiveness of the relationship between their instruction and the assessment which occurs within their classrooms. If a situation arises where the teacher realizes that student mastery for a particular assessment is below 60 percent for the entire class (use this percentage as a district standard), that teacher should take the following steps:

Not take the grade as a recorded grade in the gradebook for the entire class

Determine which objectives/TEKS/SEs you need to re-teach to the entire based off your analysis of the assessment data

Re-teach only the TEKS/SEs you have identified as the ones in which your students had difficulty mastering which caused their failure on the 1st assessment

Re-assess the students. Students passing the original test can have the option of re-taking the test and possibly earning a higher score or keeping the grade earned the first time – students failing will not have that option.

Each teacher should give careful attention to the problem of pupils who are not doing satisfactory work.

Intervention strategies to identify and remediate issues are critical. The giving of failing grades excessively, used only as a crutch or challenge, cannot do much to raise the standard of work in a class. It is possible that the issuance of 20% to 30% F's does more harm than good in most cases. The national average of failures ranges from 5% to 12%. When the percentage exceeds this maximum, it should act as a challenge and indicate a need for the teacher to look for the following things:

1. Are your standards higher than the ability of your students?
2. Re-evaluate your methods and techniques
3. Allow for individual differences and needs or additional study
4. Compare your tests and standards with other teachers
5. Be certain that your tests are an accurate measurement of what you have

taught. Education Code 13.904(a); 16.056(d); TAC 105.251; 19TAC 121.1

Teachers who routinely have class failure rates at and above 15% during grade reporting cycles may be asked by their campus principal to provide documentation of the attempted interventions, parent contacts, tutorial logs, etc. in order to demonstrate efforts by the teacher to ensure student success.

Opportunities for Individual Students to re-do failed classwork and/or failed assessments:

A student will be allowed to re-take or redo an assessment or daily assignment once (daily quiz, homework, etc.) with a maximum grade of 70 or the option to keep the higher grade if the reassessment is failed again (in other words, retaking/redoing an assignment cannot result in a lower grade for the student than the original score). Students will not be allowed to retake an assignment or assessment which, due to timing conflicts with grade submission deadlines, prevents teachers from offering a re-do and still be able to meet grade deadlines (i.e. finals, Six Week Exams, etc.). Procedures for a student to follow after an absence will also be addressed in the "Makeup & Late Work" section.

- In accordance with EIA (Local), a teacher shall allow a student a reasonable opportunity to make up or redo a class assignment or retake a test for which the student received a failing grade.

Long term projects such as research papers are exempt from this requirement. The student will have three (3) school days after receiving the failing grade to complete the retake of the assignment or test. Extenuating circumstances will be addressed by each individual teacher.

Clarification: If a student makes 50 on an assignment and is re-assessed and makes an 80, the students will receive a 70. If a student fails the reassessment the student will receive the higher of the two grades made.

NOTE: A student may be given a replacement assignment when retaking or redoing failed assignments/ tests at the discretion of the individual teachers.

Makeup & Late Work:

- In grades 6-12, **makeup work** due dates will be determined by the original allotted time allowed to complete the assignment as well as the date the student received the missed assignment. Students have one

day per absence to make up for the missed assignment. Assignment due dates will be determined by the date of absence as well as by the date the assignment was given to the student.

- Points to be deducted for **late work**- Students will be assigned the following penalties for work not turned in during the class period that it is due:
 - One day late- reduction by 10 points
 - Two days late-reduction by 20 points
 - Three days late-reduction by 30 points
 - Prior to the fourth day of a late assignment there should be communication by the teacher with the student, parent, and principal.
 - On the fourth day an assignment is late, a grade of zero may be entered in the teacher's grade book.

Clarification: A student turns in an assignment 2 days late and scores an 80; the grade to be recorded is a 60.

SUSPENSION

- The District shall not impose a grade penalty for make-up work after an absence because of suspension.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson plans serve not only the role of giving teachers an avenue to properly plan and adjust classroom instruction based on the needs of the classes, they provide the campus with legal documentation that supports the requirement for teachers to adhere to a state mandated curriculum (TEKS). In cases where a student's lack of success on the STAAR is called into question based on inadequate teacher preparation of said student, lesson plans back up the teacher in staying true to the curriculum. Teacher lesson plans should be kept up to date - not for paperwork to file, but for the betterment that students receive in instruction when teachers are well planned in their classroom instruction. Administration will periodically check teacher lesson plans. Plans should be detailed enough that a substitute could teach the lesson in your absence, and should include TEKS, a warmup / bellringer and materials.

Lesson plans should be complete and available for viewing in Forethought by 4:00 on Friday the week preceding the lesson plan dates or as directed by your building principal.

SPED ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

Accommodations/Modifications for students qualifying for SPED services are federal law and must be implemented. Check periodically as these sometimes change after annual ARD meetings. Implementing the acc/mods not only validates that we are meeting the mandatory IEP requirements that law requires, but also serves as campus documentation that our teaching staff is committed to serving the needs of all our varied student learners. Please keep any other documentation from the SpEd department readily available in case of audit.

SPED ARD INPUT

Teachers will be asked to submit input regarding student performance, behavior and mastery of TEKS prior to ARD. Your input is important as decisions are made by ARD committee. Please complete and return forms in a timely fashion, and remember that these comments are read aloud in the ARD to parents and committee members. You may also be scheduled to attend ARDs for your students. Please refer to the following guidelines when participating in ARDS:

- When in doubt, refer questions/concerns to the assigned ARD administrator or Paige Rivas. Please understand that with this responsibility, the ARD administrator will make judgment calls on when to stop conversations which are not best suited for the ARD.
- Make sure you introduce yourself to the parent even if you have met before
- Keep the conference positive, at least from your perspective (we can't control the perspective of the parent)
- If giving an opinion about what is best for the student, use data to back it up

- Share only information which is factual as describable from behaviors, not judgmental (i.e. don't say the student is lazy, explain the opportunities which you have provided which the student has not taken advantage of)
- Act as if you wish to be there, not as if you are being burdened by having to be in attendance.
- If you cannot be in attendance, please submit something in writing which can be used to help assess the student's progress in your class
- When you do submit a written statement, please remember that it becomes an official document of the ARD and the parent can obtain a copy of it, so follow the guidelines listed here exactly as if you were in attendance.
- Please don't tell the parent you have never seen SPED paperwork for the student (even if you haven't) and be prepared to share samples of the student's work.
- Be prepared to share samples/examples of how you have modified or made appropriate accommodations
- Do not offer your medical evaluation of the student or recommend that the student receive special services. The ARD facilitator/diagnostician will maintain that role.
- Understand the difference between an accommodation and a modification, and use this terminology to suit the situation:
 - A modification indicates that **WHAT** is being taught, the TEKS content, is being modified by either a change in what the student is expected to learn or reducing the concepts to be learned. A modification to the curriculum is usually indicated by IEP goals.
 - An accommodation is a tool that provides equal access to students. An accommodation indicates **HOW** the TEKS content will be taught, made accessible, or assessed. Accommodations can be used school wide to address the needs of all students
- When making recommendations for students' testing accommodations, please ensure that you are giving access to these same accommodations on a regular basis for those students during your classes.
- Please do not use students in the ARD to make points- again, give your observable facts without judgment and if the parent wants to question the student, then so be it.

Finally, please understand that you have a legal obligation to follow the recommendations of the ARD committee and the specifics of students' Individual Education Program (IEPs).

THREE PART OBJECTIVE (TPO)

Best instructional practices include students understanding the expectation for their performance in every class period. All TISD teachers will be expected to use TPOs (or some reduced form in lower levels) in their classrooms and lesson plans. Three part objectives are a way of maximizing this on a daily basis in teachers' classrooms.

Although mainly used in grades 4 and above, the concept can be utilized on a smaller level with younger learners. Here are some guidelines for creating effective TPOs for classes on a daily basis:

A well-written objective statement provides a clear picture of the outcome or performance you expect as a result of the lesson. It should be specific, concise, and, most importantly, *observable* or *measurable*. Objective statements contain three parts: behavior, conditions, and criteria. The following table shows how these parts interact.

<i>Objective Part</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Example</i>
Behavior	What students will be able to do	Students will <i>create</i> a time line of the main events at Gettysburg,
Conditions	How they will be able to do it	after generating a graphic organizer on Chapter 5: A Decisive Battle,
Criterion	Degree of accuracy Observed	with a rubric rating of 3 (out of 5) or better.

In this example, the lesson plan would call for the students to first generate a graphic organizer about a chapter titled “A Decisive Battle.” Then, the students will create a timeline of the main events at Gettysburg. The teacher will assess each time line using a rubric. Any students who do not earn a rubric rating of a 3 or better will require additional instruction or reinforcement.

Additional Examples:

- Given four works of short fiction of contrasting genres, the student will analyze and match each work with its correct genre.
- Using the *washingtonpost.com* Web site, the student will correctly identify and print out two examples each of a news article and an editorial regarding a topical new item.
- Given twenty examples of incorrect verb tense usage, the student will identify and correct a minimum of sixteen instances.

When writing objective statements, ask yourself these questions:

- Does the objective focus on student performance?
- Is the task measurable or observable?
- What criteria will I use to establish that the objective has been reached?

Note:

- Avoid words like *understand*, *learn*, and *know*. They are not measurable because there is no product involved.
- Sometimes the degree of accuracy is implied by words such as correctly and successfully.
- Not all lessons result in a tangible product. Therefore, when students verbally demonstrate their learning, the measurable action involves *telling*, *explaining*, or *discussing*.

Here are some more helpful pointers with writing effective TPOs:

3 Parts of a Behavioral Objective	Description of the part	Wording to use
Condition	Describes the materials, commands, circumstances, or directions needed for student performance	Upon request the student will...Given (some physical object) the student will...
Action Verb	Describes a behavior you can observe	Example verbs to use: analyze, apply, assess, classify, compose, construct, define, demonstrate, describe, estimate, evaluate, generate, identify, interpret, label locate, measure, name, predict, solve , translate
Criteria	Describes how well the learner must perform	...at least 3 times. ...at least 10 numbers. ...80% correctly. ...in no less than 10 sentences. ...that include...

TUTORIALS

In an effort to further promote interventions that are tailored to encourage success for all learners, tutorials will be scheduled in order to extend the learning time for any student failing or in danger of failing a subject. Each teacher will be required to provide tutorial times for students. Times will be structured in order to provide flexibility to students to be able to attend tutorials. Because of individual situations that may prohibit students from being able to

attend either in the morning or after school, teachers will need to have scheduled tutorial times that allow for both mornings and afternoons.