

# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



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# Employee Handbook Acknowledgement

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

Employees have the option of receiving the handbook in electronic format or hard copy.

To access the handbook in electronic format:

- Visit: [www.dickinsonisd.org](http://www.dickinsonisd.org)
  - Select STAFF
  - Select Employee handbook
- or
- Select Department, Human Resources
  - Quicklinks

**The Handbook Acknowledgement will be provided in the Back-to-School Checklist via Talent Ed Records with the following options:**

- ☐ I choose to receive the employee handbook in electronic format and accept responsibility for accessing it according to the instructions provided.
- ☐ I choose to receive a hard copy of the employee handbook and understand I am required to contact \_\_\_\_\_ to obtain a hard copy.

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

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

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

# Introduction

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

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

# District Information

## Description of the District

Public education in Dickinson began in 1891 in a single schoolhouse located near Dickinson Bayou and what is now Highway 3. The school district was organized into an independent school district in 1941, when it had an enrollment of 541 students. In 1953, the Dickinson public schools consolidated with the Bacliff-San Leon schools to create the District as it is configured today.

Located halfway between Houston and Galveston on the Texas Gulf Coast, the Dickinson ISD now serves approximately 11,600 students in 14 different school who live in the cities of Dickinson, League City, and Texas City and the unincorporated towns of Bacliff and San Leon.

To help accommodate the growing student enrollment, voters have approved six bond issues in the past two decades totaling more than \$410 million, which has provided several new campuses as well as renovations and expansions on other campuses. The most recently bond referendum was approved in November 2020. The largest project included in the 2020 bond is for the construction of the district's third junior high, tentatively scheduled to open in August 2023.

In 2019, Dickinson ISD celebrated the opening of a ninth-grade building on the campus of Dickinson High School. Located at the corner of Baker Drive and FM 517, this new building houses up to 900 high school freshmen helps alleviate the growing high school student enrollment. Kranz Junior High opened in August 2018 as the district's second junior high. It is named for Eugene "Gene" Kranz, a long-time Dickinson resident and NASA pioneer who served as Mission Control Flight Director for Gemini and Apollo programs. Kranz Junior High serves half of the district's students in grades 7-8 and is also home to the junior high STEM Academy. The STEM Academy, which is also available to students in grades 5-6, is open to students throughout the district to apply and is designed to increase student achievement by engaging students in innovative science, technology, engineering, and math instruction.

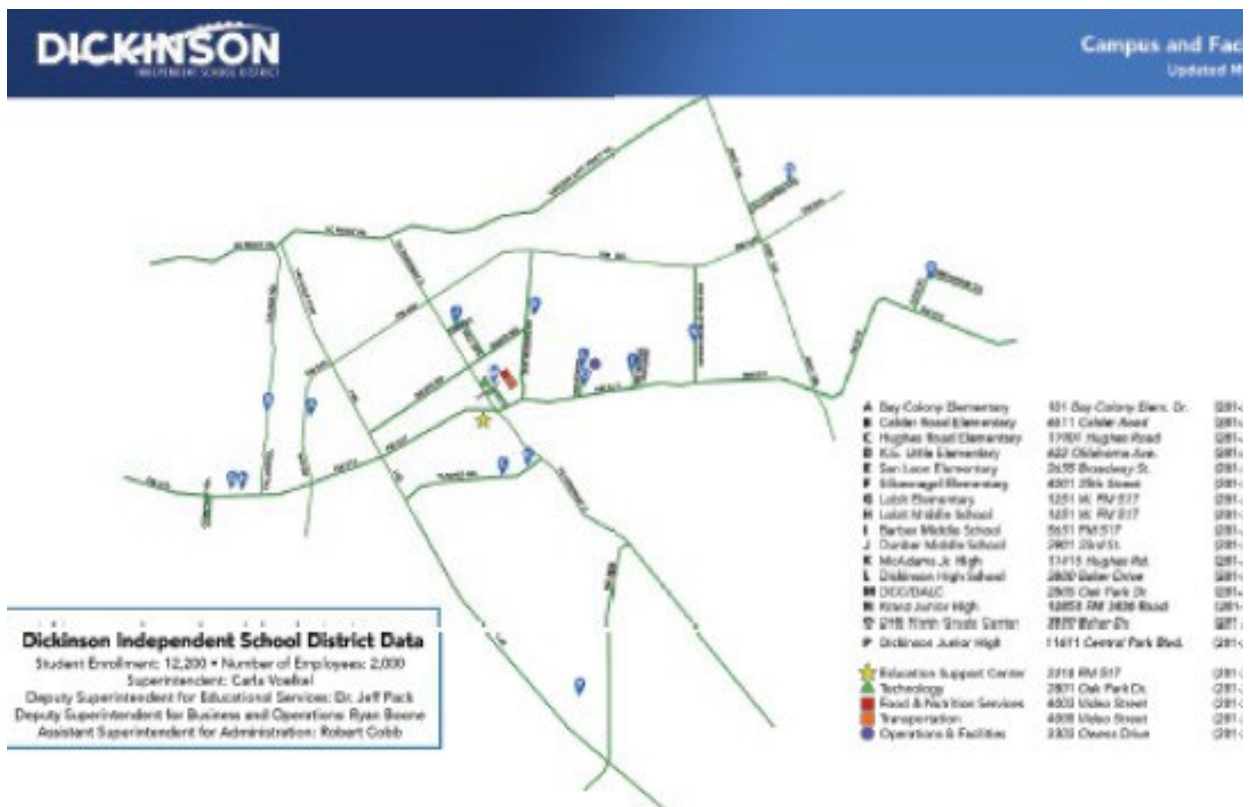
The district includes seven elementary campuses, Bay Colony Elementary, Calder Road Elementary, Hughes Road Elementary, K.E. Little Elementary, Lobit Elementary, San Leon Elementary and Silbernagel Elementary, which serve pre-kindergarten through grade four in designated attendance zones. Barber Middle School, Dunbar Middle School and Lobit Middle School are home to the district's fifth and sixth grade students. Seventh and eighth grade students attend Kranz Junior High and McAdams Junior High and students in grades 9-12 attend Dickinson High School. The Dickinson Continuation Center (DCC) provides students with a non-



traditional academic learning environment in order to earn a high school diploma. The campus works with students who due to family, work or other issues might not otherwise ever obtain a high school diploma. The Dickinson alternative Learning Center (DALC) serves assigned students. The district also offers the Gator Academy which provides employees with a cost-effective daycare option for their children ages six weeks to five years.

Dickinson ISD covers 61 square miles, which is much more than the City of Dickinson boundaries. The district's boundaries on the north take in portions of Tuscan Lakes on both sides of Highway 96. To the south, the district goes all the way to the Gulf Greyhound Dog Track on both sides of I-45 and includes the new Tanger Outlet Mall and the new Lago Mar subdivision, which will surround the outlet mall. Galveston Bay, including the communities of Bacliff and San Leon, is the district's eastern boundary. To the west, the district goes up to Cemetery Road and includes all the new communities in the Bay Colony area.

## District Map



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

### *Policy AE*

#### **Our Mission:**

Dickinson ISD will equip and empower all learners with skills and experiences to achieve academic excellence and make meaningful contributions to our world.

#### **Our Vision:**

Inclusive of all, Dickinson ISD will cultivate excellence, producing confident, collaborative, goal-driven learners who become empowered citizens in a global society.

#### **Our Objectives:**

All students will learn and apply life skills to meaningfully engage and impact their community.

All students will graduate college, career, and/or military ready.

All students will develop the communication skills necessary to work in a collaborative environment.

All students will learn to self-advocate by developing confidence in their ability to determine their own path for success.

All students will develop innovative technological skills and interact responsibly in a constantly evolving global society.

All students will demonstrate the ability to face adversity with perseverance, integrity, and leadership.

All students will demonstrate social and emotional skills and model positive character traits.

#### **Our District Goals:**

The Board of Trustees, in collaboration with the administration of DISD, establishes these District Goals:

1. DISD will provide effective teaching and learning experiences for all students that will result in continuous success.
2. DISD will provide a physically and emotionally safe, healthy, and equitable environment.
3. DISD will make family and community partnerships a priority.

4. DISD will recruit, develop, and retain a diverse and effective staff committed to personal and professional growth focusing on student needs.
5. DISD will provide operational services to support the success of student learning.

## **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 by the school district's registered voters and serve three-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

- Corey Magliolo, President
- Jessica Rodriguez, Vice President
- Veanna Veasey, Secretary
- Kenna Cotton, Trustee
- Mike Mackey, Trustee
- Mary Anthamatten, Trustee
- Jonathan Mills, Trustee

The board usually meets monthly at the Educational Support Center, 2218 FM 517 East.

Scheduled meetings can be found at:

[http://www.dickinsonisd.org/uplaod/page/0023/BOT%20Meeting%202020-20201\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.dickinsonisd.org/uplaod/page/0023/BOT%20Meeting%202020-20201_FINAL.pdf)

In the event that large attendance is anticipated, the board may meet at an alternate location. 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 Educational Support Center at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a one-hour notice.

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.

## 2023-2024 Board of Trustees Meeting Dates

Board Meeting begin at 6:30 p.m.

<b>July 2024</b>	<b>August 2024</b>	<b>September 2024</b>
<b>Monday, July 22</b> Action/Workshop Meeting	<b>Monday, August 5</b> Action Meeting  <b>Monday, August 26</b> Special Called to Approve Budget Amendments, Year End Business, Public Hearing for Budget Approval & Setting Tax Rate	<b>Monday, September 9</b> Action Meeting  <b>Monday, September 16</b> Workshop Meeting (if needed)
<b>October 2024</b>	<b>November 2024</b>	<b>December 2024</b>
<b>Monday, October 7</b> Action Meeting  <b>Monday, October 21</b> Workshop Meeting (if needed)	<b>Monday, November 4</b> Action Meeting  <b>Monday, November 18</b> Workshop Meeting (if needed)	<b>Tuesday, December 10</b> Action Meeting 7:00 p.m.
<b>January 2025</b>	<b>February 2025</b>	<b>March 2025</b>
<b>Monday, January 13</b> Action Meeting  <b>Monday, January 27</b> Workshop Meeting (if needed)	<b>Monday, February 3</b> Action Meeting  <b>Monday, February 17</b> Workshop Meeting (if needed)	<b>Monday, March 3</b> Action Meeting  <b>Monday, March 31</b> Workshop Meeting (if needed)
<b>April 2025</b>	<b>May 2025</b>	<b>June 2025</b>
<b>Monday, April 7</b> Action Meeting  <b>Monday, April 21</b> Workshop Meeting (if needed)	<b>Monday, May 12</b> Action Meeting Canvass Election Returns/Election of Officers	<b>Monday, June 2</b> Action Meeting  <b>Monday, June 16</b> Workshop Meeting (if needed)

# **Dickinson ISD District of Innovation Plan**

## **Introduction**

House Bill 1842, created and passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session in Spring 2015, provides a unique opportunity for Texas public school districts to exempt themselves from some parts of the Texas Education Code. In order to do this, a public school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

As a District of Innovation, Dickinson ISD may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students.
- Increase freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Power to innovate and think differently.

HB 1842 does not allow exemptions from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements or academic and financial accountability.

## **District of Innovation Process and Timeline**

- March 31, 2016 – Special presentation for Dickinson ISD district and campus administrators by David Anthony, Raise Your Hand Texas
- April 27, 2016 – District of Innovation presentation with David Anderson at Region IV for district administrators
- Fall 2016 – Review of district plans submitted for District of Innovation
- November 15, 2016 CAPE meeting to review and discuss District of Innovation Plans developed by districts in the Gulf Coast area of Region IV
- December 12, 2016 – District of Innovation Resolution passed by Dickinson ISD Board of Trustees and the District Educational Improvement Committee designated as the local innovation committee
- December 12-2016 – Public Hearing to discuss purpose for District of Innovation
- December 12, 2016 – Letter from Superintendent to all employees and teacher professional organizations informing of the district's intent to pursue District of Innovation
- December 13, 2016 – DOI process and timeline shared with DEIC members and posted on district website
- December 15, 2016 – DOI process and timeline shared with campus and district administrators
- January 3-6, 2017 – Draft plan developed by DOI subcommittee

- January 9, 2017 – District of Innovation update provided to Board of Trustees
- January 10, 2017 - DISD District of Innovation Public Meeting
- January 10, 2017 – Draft District of Innovation Plan reviewed by DISD District Educational Improvement Committee
- January 12, 2017 – February 12, 2017 – Dickinson ISD’s District of Innovation Plan posted on the DISD website; concurrently, the plan will be submitted to Texas Education Agency Commissioner, Mike Morath
- March 6, 2017 - DISD District of Innovation Plan submitted to DISD Board of Trustees for approval
- March-April 2017 – Updates of all DOI related local and legal policies will be reviewed, revised, and submitted to the Dickinson ISD Board of Trustees for approval

## Term

Dickinson ISD will be recognized as a District of Innovation for a term of five years, renewable within six months of the plan’s expiration date of February 2027. If, within the term of the plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board of Trustees will appoint a committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. The plan is amendable by a majority vote of the District Educational Improvement Committee and Board of Trustees. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. Dickinson ISD will not implement two separate plans at any one time.

## Innovation Plan

Dickinson ISD proposes flexibility and seeks an exemption in the following areas:

### Teacher Certification (Revised September 2022)

Texas Education Code §21.003, §21.044, §21.053, §21.055(d.I), §21.057(A-E), 19 Texas Administrative Code § 231

DBA(LEGAL), DBA(LOCAL),  
DK(LEGAL), DK(LOCAL),  
DK(EXHIBIT)

#### Rationale:

- Dickinson ISD is committed to providing students with the highest level of academic instruction possible. Currently, in the event the district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position, or a teacher is assigned to a subject outside of his/her certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency and wait for an approval or denial to be issued from the Commissioner of Education.
- Dickinson ISD wants decisions regarding certification to be handled locally and approved by the Superintendent and/or designee.
- The goal of Dickinson ISD will be to continue to hire certified teachers; however, flexibility is needed in areas that are difficult to find highly effective candidates with

the required teacher certification. For example, many of the career pathways established by House Bill 5, 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, require very specialized certification.

- Statutes and regulations inhibit the development of post high school plans and improvement of workforce skills to the extent these laws limit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high-demand career, and technical courses when quality certified teachers are not available.
- This provision will provide Dickinson ISD flexibility in hiring professionals from technical fields, college instructors, and internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their certification's areas. This exemption also applies to the associated requirements of field experience and parental notification, and it negates the need to request approval from the commissioner of Education.

**Innovation:**

For Career and Technical Education (CTE) (including STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and Dual Credit certification areas:

- Dickinson ISD Human Resources Department will submit a written request for approval to fill a teaching position to the Superintendent or designee for a degreed, non-certified, yet highly qualified, professional with career/industry experience to teach a CTE subject withing his/her area of expertise.
- The written request will outline the reason for the request, and it will document the credentials the recommended teacher possesses which qualify him/her to teach the subject. In addition, the written request must be submitted to the Superintendent or designee for approval prior to recommending to the Board of Trustees.
- In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of career and technical course offerings, Dickinson ISD seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. This exemption will afford Dickinson ISD the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades and vocations to teach the crafts of those trades and vocations, such as welding, health sciences, architecture, and construction, in Career and Technical Education courses.

## Teacher Appraisals

Texas Education Code §21.351 (a)(2),  
§21.352(a)(2)(B)

DNA(LEGAL), DNA(LOCAL)

### **Rationale:**

The commissioner shall adopt a recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of teachers. The criteria must be based on observable, job-related behavior that includes the performance of teachers' students.

### **Innovation:**

The Dickinson ISD District and Campus Improvement Committees have adopted and support the locally developed teacher appraisal system. The evaluation criteria are rigorous, and student performance data (failure rates, passing rates, reading levels, common assessments, and curriculum-based assessments, TELPAS, STAAR, PSAT and SAT) are monitored routinely. The district will update the locally developed appraisal rubric and each teacher will develop annual performance and professional goals. However, we feel student learning objectives are subjective and they will not be part of our locally developed appraisal process.

## Teacher Contracts (Probationary)

Texas Education Code §21.102

DCA(LEGAL)

### **Rationale:**

- Currently, a person who is employed as a teacher by a school district for the first time, or who has not been employed by the district for two consecutive school years, shall be employed under a probationary contract.
- DISD is a fast-growing district and at times our staffing model is not able to accurately project class size enrollment.
- Non-certified teachers and/or teachers that are hired after the first instructional day are not always the most qualified for the position.

### **Innovation:**

In an effort to provide quality educational opportunities for all students throughout the district, DIAD would like the option of offering non-certified teachers and/or late hires (after the first day of instruction) an agreement rather than a contract. This will allow for flexibility in taking timely employment actions that, in turn, would provide students with a quality teacher.



## First Day of Instruction

Texas Education Code §25.0811

DCA(LEGAL)

### **Rationale:**

Texas Education Code states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August. This forces the district into a calendar that has minimal opportunity for teacher professional development, causes shortened grading periods when the first semester ends in December and provided negligible time for summer school before state mandated assessment re-takes in the summer.

### **Innovation:**

To best serve the students in Dickinson ISD, we will move the school start date for students to no earlier than the third week of August. Starting earlier will allow for creative scheduling that allows for more intentional teacher professional development throughout the school year and also allows students to have a schedule that is more conducive to their learning.

## Student/Teacher Ratios: Class Size

Texas Education Code §25.111-13,  
§25.112(A-G), §25.113(A-B)

EEB(LEGAL)

### **Rationale:**

A 22 to 1 student/teacher ratio is required by State law for Kindergarten to 4th grade classes. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency, and the district must notify parents of waivers to class size limits.

### **Innovation:**

Dickinson ISD is a fast-growth district, and for the past several years, a class size waiver to TEA has been required. Based on our observations, we believe it is not the number of students but the relationship of the teacher to students and make-up of the classroom which most directly influence the learning environment. Dickinson ISD will continuously monitor enrollment at the elementary campuses. When each teacher in a grade level has 25 students, an additional teacher will be added. A TEA waiver will not be submitted; however, the Superintendent will report enrollment to the Board of Trustees.

## Professional Development

Texas Education Code §21.451, §21.458

DMA(LEGAL)

### **Rationale:**

- With a diverse student population, Dickinson ISD’s educators must be well equipped to meet the unique needs of each student. Currently, the district is required to implement state-mandated professional development that may not be beneficial to our staff needs.
- The state currently lays out specific requirements for teacher mentors. An exemption from these requirements would allow DISD to determine qualified mentors based on classroom performance rather than on seniority.

**Innovation:**

- Dickinson ISD believes that the district level committee (EIC) is better equipped to determine professional development that will best meet the needs of local staff so that staff development can remain flexible and responsive to newly emerging data.
- As a fast-growth district, Dickinson ISD employs many new teachers each year. It is very important that mentors be effective classroom teachers who can support new teachers in their first years in the profession. Being exempt from this requirement would increase the pool of teachers from which the district could draw for our mentoring program.

### Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator

Texas Education Code §37.0012

FO(LEGAL)

**Rationale:**

Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a Campus Behavior Coordinator on each campus. This person is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

**Innovation:**

Dickinson ISD believes in a collaborative approach to discipline, with multiple people providing emotional social support to students, rather than just one person. All campus principals and assistant principals handle student discipline. Each campus administrator will serve as a Campus Behavior Coordinator in regard to student discipline, as outlined in the Dickinson ISD Student Code of Conduct.

### School District Depositories

Texas Education Code §45.205-45.209

BDAE(LEGAL)

**Rationale:**

Districts are required to bid depository banking services at minimum every 6 years.

**Innovation:**

There are a limited number of banking entities with the interest in serving the district’s financial needs. In addition, changing banks requires a burdensome administrative effort.

DISD already monitors the availability of services and the pricing. Newer banking regulations are making local-government-entity business unattractive to banks, so the options are expected to remain limited in the near future.

## September 2022 Amendments

### Teacher Certification (Revised September 2022)

Texas Education Code §21.003, §21.044,  
§21.051, §21.053, §21.057 19 Texas  
Administrative Code § 231

DBA(LEGAL), DBA(LOCAL), DK(LEGAL),  
DK(LOCAL), DK(EXHIBIT)

#### Rationale:

- Dickinson ISD is committed to providing students with the highest level of academic instruction possible. Currently, in the event the district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position, or a teacher is assigned to a subject outside of his/her certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency and wait for an approval or denial to be issued from the Commissioner of Education.
- Dickinson ISD wants decisions regarding certification to be handled locally and approved by the Superintendent and/or designee.
- The goal of Dickinson ISD will be to continue to hire certified teachers; however, flexibility is needed in areas that are difficult to find highly effective candidates with the required teacher certification. For example, many of the career pathways established by House Bill 5, 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, require very specialized certification.
- Statutes and regulations inhibit the development of post high school plans and improvement of workforce skills to the extent these laws limit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high-demand career, and technical courses when quality certified teachers are not available.
- This provision will provide Dickinson ISD flexibility in hiring professionals from technical fields, college instructors, and internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their certification areas. This exemption also applies to the associated requirements of field experience and parental notification, and it negates the need to request approval from the Commissioner of Education.

#### Innovation:

For Career and Technical Education (CTE) (including STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and Dual Credit certification areas:

- Dickinson ISD Human Resources Department will submit a written request for approval to fill a teaching position to the Superintendent or designee for a degreed, non-certified, yet highly qualified professional with career/industry experience to teach a CTE subject within his/her area of expertise.

- The written request will outline the reason for the request, and it will document the credentials the recommended teacher possesses which qualify him/her to teach the subject. In addition, the written request must be submitted to the Superintendent or designee for approval prior to recommending to the Board of Trustees.
- In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of career and technical course offerings, Dickinson ISD seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. This exemption will afford Dickinson ISD the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades and vocations to teach the crafts of those trades and vocations, such as welding, health sciences, architecture, and construction, in Career and Technical Education courses.

For allowing teachers to teach one subject outside of their certification area, but inside their grade level cluster:

- The campus principal may submit a request to allow for a certified teacher to teach one subject out of their certified field, yet still within their certification grade cluster, with written consent from the teacher. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or experience the certified teacher possesses to teach the subject (e.g., an elementary principal may submit a request for a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who is certified EC-4<sup>th</sup> ELAR to teach 4<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies).

For allowing teachers to teach outside of their grade level cluster, but inside their certification area:

- The campus principal may submit a request to allow for a certified teacher to teach outside of their certification grade cluster, yet within their certified field, with written consent from the teacher (e.g., a junior school principal may submit a request to allow for a teacher who is certified 7-12 Science to teach 6<sup>th</sup> grade Science).

For a teacher who is fully certified in another state, they will be considered a certified teacher in Dickinson ISD for one year on a probationary status if:

- The employee creates a Texas Educator TEAL account and applies for and pays for their: review of out of state credential, one-year temporary certification, and fingerprints: and
- The employee agrees to register for appropriate certification examinations.

For a teacher applicant who is in the process of obtaining certification, they may be hired in an “at will” capacity and paid as a teacher before the effective date of the issuance of a valid certificate if the following apply:

- The individual is recommended for hire no more than 20 days before the first day of instruction or after the start of the instructional year; and
- The candidate will be issued a certificate by the deadline set annually by the Human Resources Department.

## **Removal of Unwanted Visitors (New September 2022)**

Texas Education Code §37.105 19 Texas Administrative Code §103.1207	GKA(LEGAL), GKA(LOCAL)
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**Rationale:**

- Texas Education Code §37.105, applies to removing visitors from campuses and school events. This applies to parents and community members, not students. In 2017, the Texas Legislature changed the law on how school administrators can eject unruly guests from school events. Under the law, the guest must be given a warning before he or she is ejected. Upon ejection, the guest must also be given notice of how he can appeal the ejection.
- Given the heightened awareness of school safety, there may be instances where providing a warning and written notice of the appeal process is not in the best interest of student and spectator safety.

**Innovation:**

- A school/district administrator, school resource officer, or school district peace officer may refuse to allow persons to enter on or may eject a person from property under the district's control immediately without warning and written notice of appeal if:
  - The person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person: or
  - The person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting.
  - A person refused entry to or ejected from property controlled by the district may appeal such refusal of entry or ejection in accordance with Board policy [see FNG, GF].

## Summary

Through HB 1842, Dickinson ISD will have increased flexibility and local control to make decisions. The Dickinson ISD Innovation Plan identifies current State laws from which the district seeks relief in order to best meet the needs of all stakeholders. Adjustments to Board policy will be reviewed, updated, and presented to the DISD Board of Trustees.

Reviewed and approved by Dickinson ISD DEIC – February 2022, Amended September 2022

## Administration

Dr. Rebecca Brown	Superintendent (ext. 6101)
Dr. Jeff Pack	Deputy Superintendent for Educational Services (ext. 6067)
Ryan Boone	Deputy Superintendent for Business & Operations (ext. 7270)
Robert Cobb	Assistant Superintendent for Administration (ext. 6102)
Kimberly Rich	Executive Director of Human Resources (ext. 6079)
Jim Rubach	Executive Director of Facility Planning and Construction (ext. 7272)
Caroline Lightfoot	Executive Director of Information Systems (ext. 6124)
Leslie Hudson	Executive Director of Payroll (ext. 6051)
Kelly Logsdon	Executive Director of Business Services (ext. 6048)
Morgan Ester	Benefits/Risk Management Coordinator (ext. 6050)
Alyse Howell	Coordinator of Purchasing (ext. 6007)
Jaime Williams	Coordinator of State and Federal Programs (ext. 6066)
Dr. Leone Clark	Director of Advance Academics (ext. 6034)
Melissa Everett	Director of Career & Technical Education (ext. 6424)
Trish Andersen	Director of Human Resources (ext. 6076)
Paul Trahan	Director of Fine Arts (ext. 6163)
Jimmy Anderson	Director of Maintenance (ext. 7261)
Dr. Debby Noffsinger	Director of Assessment, Accountability, & Compliance (ext. 6039)
Brian Cmaidalka	Director of Transportation (ext. 7311)
Wendy Haywood	Director of Custodial Services (ext. 7256)
Laura Peck	Director of Food and Nutrition Services (ext. 6062)
Tammy Dowdy	Director of Communications (ext. 6080)
Jenna Simsen	Director of Marketing & Social Media (ext. 6085)
Tamara Sherrod	Director of DISD Education Foundation (ext. 6088)
Janet Lopez	Director of Rosella Scott Gator Academy (ext. 7930)



# 2024–2025 Academic Calendar

## First Semester

August 15 – December 20, 2024

## Second Semester

January 7 – May 22, 2025

## Student/Teacher Holidays

September 2, 2024

October 14, 2024

(October 14 is a Teacher Exchange Day and a Student Holiday)

November 25-29, 2024

(Nov. 25-26 are Teacher Exchange Days/Student Holidays)

December 23, 2024 - January 3, 2025

January 20, 2025

March 17-21, 2025

April 18, 2025

May 26, 2025

## Transition Day

August 14, 2024

\* Transition Day will include Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, 4th, 6th, and 9th grade students. These students will start school a day earlier than other grades for special activities to prepare for moving into a new school level.

## New Teacher In-Service

August 2 and August 5-6, 2024

## Teacher In-Service/Student Holiday

August 7-14, 2024

September 23, 2024

November 1, 2024

January 6, 2025

February 17, 2025

March 24, 2025

May 26, 2025

## Early Release All Campuses

(2 hours early)

December 20, 2024 May 22, 2025

## Dickinson High School Graduation

May 22, 2025 - Sam Vitanza Stadium

## Nine Weeks Grading Cycle

1st 9-weeks 40 days 18,000 minutes  
(08/15-10/11)

2nd 9-weeks 43 days 19,230 minutes  
(10/15-12/20)

**First Semester 83 days 37,230 minutes**

3rd 9-weeks 47 days 21,150 minutes  
(1/7-3/14)

4th 9-weeks 42 days 18,780 minutes  
(3/25-5/22)

**Second Semester 89 days 39,930 minutes**

**Total Instructional 172 days 77,160 minutes**  
SD Waiver Days 0 minutes

**Grand Total 172 days 77,160 minutes**

Dickinson ISD Employee Handbook  
Revised July 2024



## Dickinson Independent School District

### August 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	NT	3
4	NT	NT	SD	SD	SD	10
11	SD	SD		15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### September 2024

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

### October 2024

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

### November 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					IP	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	E	E	H	H	H	30

### December 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	*3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	*14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	H	H	H	H	H	28
29	H	H				

### January 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				H	H	4
5	IP	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	H	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

### February 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	IP <sup>M</sup>	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

### March 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	H	H	H	H	H	22
23	IP <sup>M</sup>	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

### April 2025

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

### May 2025

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

### June 2025

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

### July 2025

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

- [ Grading Period Begins
- ] Grading Period Ends
- ★ ★ Begin/End STAAR Testing Window
- ^ Early Release
- H Student/Teacher Holiday
- Transition Day  
(school day for grades Pre-K, K, 4, 6, & 9)
- NT New Teacher Training
- SD Staff Development (no school for students)
- IP Instructional Planning (no school for students)
- E Student Holiday/Teacher Exchange Day
- Graduation Dickinson High School Graduation
- M Possible Bad Weather Make Up Days

## School Hours for the 2024-2025 school year

### Elementary (grades PK-3)

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

### Middle School & Junior High (grades 4-8)

7:45 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

### High School (grades 9-12)

7:05 a.m. - 2:35 p.m.

BOARD APPROVED  
FEBRUARY 6, 2024

## 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.

Assessment, Accountability & Compliance	Dr. Debby Noffsinger	Ext. 6039
ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (Employee)	Kimberly Rich	Ext. 6079
504 Coordinator (Student)	Maggie Burk	Ext. 6094
Advanced Academics	Dr. Leone Clark	Ext. 6034
Budget	Ryan Boone	Ext. 7270
Certification	Trish Andersen	Ext. 6076
Computer Technology	Caroline Lightfoot	Ext. 6124
Custodial Services	Wendy Haywood	Ext. 7256
Education Foundation	Tamara Sherrod	Ext. 6088
Employee Assistance Program	Morgan Ester	Ext. 6050
Energy Education Specialist	Jeff Pulkinen	Ext. 6044
Federal Programs/NCLB/Compensatory	Jaime Williams	Ext. 6066
Food & Nutrition	Laura Peck	Ext. 6060
Rosella Scott Gator Academy	Janet Lopez	Ext. 7930
Insurance/Premiums/Claims/Leave	Morgan Ester	Ext. 6050
Maintenance	Jimmy Anderson	Ext. 7261
Payroll	Leslie Hudson	Ext. 6051
PEIMS	Angie Estes	Ext. 6108
Personnel	Kimberly Rich	Ext. 6079
Public Information, Publicity	Tammy Dowdy	Ext. 6080
Service Records	Donna Suderman	Ext. 6073
Social Media	Jenna Simsen	Ext. 6085
Special Education/Special Programs	Jeff Pack	Ext. 6084
Substitutes	Traci Quilter	Ext. 6049
Title IX Coordinator	Robert Cobb	Ext. 6102
Transportation	Brian Cmaidalka	Ext. 7311
Worker's Compensation	Morgan Ester	Ext. 6050



## School Directory

### Dickinson High School

229-6400

3800 Baker Drive, Dickinson, TX 77539

Principal:

Director of Athletics:

Athletic Coordinator (Boy's):

Athletic Coordinator (Girl's):

Associate Principal:

Dean of Instruction:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Courtney Ramirz

John Snelson

Henry Coleman

Tina Knight-Gray

Matthew Cooper

Kendra Berg

Donnie Brown

Kim Fouts

Cara Reyes

Alex Rodriguez

Christina Cavness

Tara Shetler

Christopher Reyes

Crystal Stinson

### McAdams Junior High School

229-7100

11415 Hughes Road, Dickinson, TX 77539

Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Chad Nuetzmann

Megan Titus

Michael Herdman

Stephany Brown

### Eugene 'Gene' Kranz Junior High School

309-3600

12850 FM 3436, Dickinson, TX 77539

Principal:

Dean of Instruction:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Kimberly Kelley

Erika Peugeot

Justin Faith

Patrick Spies

### Dickinson Junior High School

309-3800

11611 Central Park Blvd, Texas City, TX 77591

Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal:

Temeka Brown

Tiffany Mumford Guyton

Clara Revuelta

Jose Molina

### Dunbar Middle School

229-6600

2901 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Dickinson, TX 77539

Principal:  
Assistant Principal:

Brandi Peterson  
Amy Link

**John & Shamarion Barber Middle School**

**229-6900**

5651 FM 517 East, Dickinson, TX 77539

Principal:  
Assistant Principal:

Brendan Fitzpatrick  
Jillian Callaway

**Dickinson Alternative Education Programs**

**229-6350**

Principal:  
Assistant Principal:

Rashad See  
Lisa Herrera

**Dickinson Continuation Center (DCC/DALC)**

2805 Oak Park, Dickinson, TX 77539

**Esmond Center (GCJJAEP)**

6101 Attwater Ave, Texas City, TX 77590

**Coastal Alternative Programs (CAP)**

**409-925-9700**

13302 Highway 6, Santa Fe, TX 77510

Principal:

LaDonna Pratt

**Lobit Education Village**

1251 West FM 517, League City, TX 77573

**Louis G. Lobit Elementary School**

**229-7600**

Principal:  
Assistant Principal:

Stephanie Williams  
Torie Stewart

**Elva C. Lobit Middle School**

**229-7700**

Principal:  
Assistant Principal:

Melody Lilley  
Meredith Antley

**Bay Colony Elementary**

**229-6200**

101 Bay Colony Elementary Dr, Dickinson, TX 77539

Principal:  
Assistant Principal:

Julie O'Gea  
Christy Littleton

**Calder Road Elementary School**

**229-7500**

6511 Calder Road, League City, TX 77573

Principal:  
Assistant Principal:

Jennifer Heard  
Jordan Arbuckle

**Kenneth E. Little Elementary School**

**229-7000**

622 Oklahoma Street, Bacliff, TX 77518

Principal:

Kimberly Davidson

Assistant Principal:

Maryori Aceituno

**Hughes Road Elementary**

**229-6700**

11901 Hughes Road, Dickinson, TX 77539

Principal:

Kathy Behrendsen

Assistant Principal:

Jacquelyn Kennedy

**San Leon Elementary**

**229-7400**

2655 Broadway, Dickinson, TX 77539

Principal:

Jacqwelin Snyder

Assistant Principal:

Martha White

**Silbernagel Elementary**

**229-6800**

4201 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Dickinson, TX 77539

Principal:

Leslie Burke

Assistant Principal:

A.J. Lemmon

**Rosella Scott Gator Academy**

**229-7930**

3606 Yupon, Dickinson, TX 77539

Director:

Janet Lopez

# Employment

## Equal Employment Opportunity

*Policies DAA, DIA*

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

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

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the Title IX coordinator for employees to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment: *Robert Cobb, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, 2218 FM 517 East, Dickinson, TX 77539, [rcobb@dickinsonisd.org](mailto:rcobb@dickinsonisd.org)*. Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, email, or phone. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator for employees for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: *Kimberly Rich, Executive Director of Human Resources, 2218 FM 517 East, Dickinson, TX 77539, [krich@dickinsonisd.org](mailto:krich@dickinsonisd.org)*.

Questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any other reason should be directed to the Superintendent.

En sus esfuerzos por promover la no discriminación y según lo exija la ley, Dickinson ISD no discrimina a ningún empleado o solicitante de empleo debido a su raza, color, religión, sexo, (incluyendo embarazo, orientación sexual o identidad de género), origen nacional, edad, discapacidad, estatus militar, información genética o sobre cualquier otra base prohibida por ley. Además, el distrito no discrimina a un empleado o solicitante que actúa para oponerse a dicha discriminación o participa en la investigación de una queja relacionada con una práctica laboral discriminatoria. Las decisiones de empleo se tomarán sobre la base de las cualificaciones laborales, la experiencia y las capacidades de cada solicitante.

De acuerdo con el Título IX, el distrito no discrimina debido al sexo y está obligado a no discriminar debido al sexo en sus programas o actividades educativas. El requisito de no discriminar se extiende al empleo. Preguntas sobre la aplicación del Título IX pueden ser referidas al coordinador del Título IX del distrito, al Subsecretario de Derechos Civiles del Departamento de Educación, o ambos.

El distrito designa y autoriza al siguiente empleado como coordinador del Título IX para que los empleados aborden preocupaciones o preguntas relacionadas con la discriminación debido al sexo, incluyendo acoso sexual: Robert Cobb, Asistente del Superintendente de Administración, 2218 FM 517 East, Dickinson, TX 77539, [rcobb@dickinsonisd.org](mailto:rcobb@dickinsonisd.org), 281-229-6102. Reportes se pueden hacer en cualquier momento y por cualquier persona, incluso fuera de las horas laborales, por correo, correo electrónico o teléfono. Durante horas laborales del distrito, los reportes también se pueden hacer en persona.

El distrito designa y autoriza a la siguiente empleada como coordinadora de ADA/Sección 504 para empleados para preocupaciones relacionadas con la discriminación por motivos de discapacidad: Kimberly Rich, Directora Ejecutiva de Recursos Humanos, 2218 FM 517 East, Dickinson, TX 77539, [krich@dickinsonisd.org](mailto:krich@dickinsonisd.org), 281-229-6079.

Preguntas o preocupaciones relacionadas con la discriminación por cualquier otra razón deben ser dirigidas a la Superintendente.

## **Job Vacancy Announcements**

### *Policy DC*

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

## **Employment after Retirement**

### *Policy DC*

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

## **Contract and 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 Online, or copies will be provided upon request.

**Noncertified Professional and Administrative Employees.** Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as noninstructional administrators) are employed by a Chapter 21 probationary or term contract.

**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 a professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to Trish Andersen, Director of Human Resources in a timely manner.

Employees licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR) must notify Kimberly Rich, Executive Director of Human Resources when there is action against, or revocation of, their license.

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

## **Recertification of Employment Authorization**

### *Policy DC*

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

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

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

### *Policy CQ, DHE*

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

**Employees Required to Have a Commercial Driver's License.** Any employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to alcohol and drug testing. This includes

all drivers who operate a motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people counting the driver, drivers of large vehicles, or drivers of vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements if their duties include driving a commercial motor vehicle.

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug testing policies and related educational material should contact Kimberly Rich, Executive Director of Human Resources.

## **Health Safety Training**

### *Policies DBA, DMA*

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

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

## **Reassignments and Transfers**

### *Policy DK*

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the superintendent or designee when the superintendent or designee determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the district. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Campus reassignments



must be approved by the principal at the receiving campus except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time unless an extracurricular or supplemental duty assignment is part of a dual-assignment contract. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the district process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and district policy DGBA(Local).

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. A teacher requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit his or her request by May 31st. 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 Human Resources office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

## **Workload and Work Schedules**

*Policies DEAB, DK, DL*

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

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

**Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees.** Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. See Overtime Compensation on page 35 for additional information.

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

*Policies DEAB, DG*

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

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

The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections of Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP Act) requires an employee to notify the district if they believe the district is out of compliance in providing breaks for a nursing mother. The employee must give the district 10 days to come into compliance before making any claim of liability against the district. An employee with concerns should contact Kimberly Rich, Executive Director of Human Resources, 281-229-6079.

## **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act**

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) provides consideration of accommodations to employees who have known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. An employee seeking a PWFA accommodation should contact Kimberly Rich, Executive Director of Human Resources, 281-229-6079, to begin the interactive process.

## **Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications**

*Policies DK, DBA*

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

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notice under ESSA is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call Trish Andersen, Director of Human Resources or Kimberly Rich, Executive Director of Human Resources.

## **Outside Employment and Tutoring**

*Policy DBD*

Employees are required to disclose in writing to their immediate supervisor any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of the district. Supervisors will consider outside

employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

## **Performance Evaluation**

### *Policy DN series*

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

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

## **Employee Involvement**

### *Policies BQA, BQB*

At both the campus and district levels, Dickinson 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 Coordinator of Federal Programs.

## **Staff Development**

### *Policy DMA*

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

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

# Compensation and Benefits

## Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

*Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB*

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See *Overtime Compensation*, page 35.)

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 Kimberly Rich, Executive Director of Human Resources or Trish Andersen, Director of Human Resources for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

## Paychecks

**All employees are paid on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 30<sup>th</sup> of each month.** The district utilizes an online program, Employee Access Center, allowing current and previous DISD employees to view personal information, including attendance, salary compensation, benefits, tax information (W2), and professional degrees/certifications. To view content in Employee Access Center you will need your user ID number (five-digit employee number) and your password (last four digits of your full social security number). If you need assistance, you may call Human Resources at (281) 229-6016 or the Technology Help Desk at (281) 229-6028.

Computers are available at all sites to enable employees an opportunity to access personal information.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Employee Access Center

Dickinson ISD has made it easy for you to get answers to your most frequently asked questions. Employee Access Center (EAC) is a resource that allows employees to view payroll and personnel information. Information that can be accessed includes the following:

- Demographic Information-Change address and contact information, view years of experience
- Additional Information-View education and certifications
- Payroll Checks-View and print payroll check history
- Salary and Benefits-View annual salary and current job position
- Leave Information-View attendance and leave information, [submit absence request for approval](#)
- Print W2's-To all current and previous employees: W2's are available on-line through the Employee Access Center, hard copies will no longer be mailed, viewed and print W2 information
- Tax Information-View filing status and exemptions
- Deductions and Benefits-View detailed deductions and benefit information

**Just follow these steps to Employee Access Center:**

- Go to [www.dickinsonisd.org](http://www.dickinsonisd.org)
- Click on the "Staff" tab (right side of the website)
- Under "Employee Information" click on "Employee Access Center"
- Enter user ID: employee ID number (5digits)
- Enter Password: Last four digits of Social Security (*Note: May default to the entire number, no spaces or dashes*)
- Need Password or User ID assistance, please call the Help Desk at (281)229-6028 or HR at (281)229-6016

## **Automatic Payroll Deposit**

Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of two pay periods is necessary to activate this service. Contact payroll 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)
- Child support and spousal maintenance, if applicable
- Delinquent federal education loan payments, if applicable

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

**Overpayments.** Employees are not entitled to any funds the district overpays. An agreement between an employee and the district must be in place in order to deduct any overpayment from one or more paychecks if an overpayment occurs.

## **Overtime Compensation**

*Policies DEAB, DEC*

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

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

Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours.

Employees may be compensated for overtime (i.e., hours beyond 40 in a workweek) at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

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

## **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

### *Policy DEE*

Prior approval for all travel and advance monies must be obtained from the supervisor and budget manager before any expenses are incurred. Use the DISD form “Dickinson ISD Travel Advance and Expense Report” or “Student Travel Request”. All out-of-state travel must be approved by the Board of Trustees. Failure to receive approval may result in nonpayment of expenses. If advance monies have been issued, the actual expenditure report must be turned in within ten (10) days after the trip has taken place. It is important for all receipts (except meals) be attached to the travel report. If several teachers are traveling to the same activity, it is expected that they will travel together. Please refer to Employee and Student Travel Guidelines and Procedures Manual (Fall 2022, revision).

## **Health, Dental, and Life Insurance**

### *Policy CRD*

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

- Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
- Employees who are not contributing TRS members and who are employed for 20 or more regularly scheduled hours per week

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

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each year or when they experience a qualifying event (e.g., marriage, divorce, birth). Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees on the district benefits website. Employees should check [www.mybenefitshub.com/dickinsonisd/](http://www.mybenefitshub.com/dickinsonisd/) or contact Morgan Ester for additional information.

**New employees must enroll or decline health insurance and other benefit plans no later than 30 days from their official date of hire. Failure to enroll will result in loss of coverage in these insurance plans until the next open enrollment date.**

Enrollment for medical and supplemental insurance must be processed using the Benefits Hub system at; [www.mybenefitshub.com/dickinsonisd/](http://www.mybenefitshub.com/dickinsonisd/).

#### TRS ActiveCare HD

A statewide health coverage PPO program that is administered through Blue Cross

Blue Shield. This plan is a High Deductible Plan at \$3,200 annual deductible per individual and \$6,400 annual family deductible. This plan is compatible with a Health Savings Account (HSA). Prescription drugs are subject to individual and family deductibles. Preventive Care is covered at 100% per plan guidelines. For more information see the TRS website [www.bcbstx.com/trsactivecare](http://www.bcbstx.com/trsactivecare)

#### TRS ActiveCare Primary

A statewide health coverage HMO program that is administered through Blue Cross Blue Shield. A Primary Care Physician (PCP) must be selected for each individual covered by the plan. The plan has lower monthly premiums. This plan is not compatible with a Health Savings Account (HSA). The annual individual deductible is \$2,500 and a \$5,000 annual family deductible. Individuals covered by this plan pay copays for doctor visits and most prescriptions. Preventative care is covered 100%, per plan guidelines. For more information see the TRS website: [www.bcbstx.com/trsactivecare](http://www.bcbstx.com/trsactivecare)

#### TRS ActiveCare Primary Plus (Formally Select)

A statewide health coverage program that is administered through Blue Cross Blue Shield. A Primary Care Physician (PCP) must be selected for each individual covered by the plan. This plan is not compatible with a Health Savings Account (HAS). The annual individual deductible is \$1,200 and \$2,400 annual family deductible. Individuals covered by this plan pay co-pays for doctor's visits. Prescription coverage under this plan has its own deductible. Preventive care pays 100%, per plan guidelines. For more information see the TRS website [www.bcbstx.com/trsactivecare](http://www.bcbstx.com/trsactivecare)

#### TRS ActiveCare 2

*Note: This plan is a closed plan. Only participants presently enrolled in ActiveCare 2 are eligible to remain in this plan for 2024-2025 plan year. No new enrollments will be allowed.* A statewide health coverage PPO program that is administered through Blue Cross Blue Shield. This plan is not compatible with a Health Savings Account (HAS). This annual individual deductible is \$1,000 and \$3,000 annual family deductible. Prescription drugs are subject to individual and family deductibles. Preventive Care is covered 100%, per plan guidelines. For more information see the TRS website [www.bcbstx.com/trsactivecare](http://www.bcbstx.com/trsactivecare).

## **Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

### *Policy CRD*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for dental, vision, flexible spending, life insurance, cancer, critical illness, accident, health savings account, telehealth, and disability. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction.



Employees should check [www.mybenefitshub.com/dickinsonisd/](http://www.mybenefitshub.com/dickinsonisd/) or contact Morgan Ester for additional 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 or post-tax basis (i.e., disability, accidental death and dismemberment, and additional term life insurance). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.

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

## **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

### *Policy CRE*

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from Claims Administrative Services Inc., effective September 2024 through August 2030.

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 Morgan Ester, Benefits/Risk Management Coordinator. Failure to report injury in a timely manner may result in the injury not being covered. 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 55 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 Human Resources.

## **Teacher Retirement**

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify Human Resources as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web ([www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov)). See page 39 for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

## **COBRA**

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1985 entitles all covered employees to continue their health insurance coverage for up to 18 months after terminating employment with the District. This option requires that the employee (or the employee's dependents) pay both the employee's and the District's contributions for group premiums. For additional information please follow the link:

<https://docs.mgmbenefits.com/external.aspx?DocID=10384602&InBrowser=1>

## **Other Benefit Programs**

### **Employee Assistance Program**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is designed to help employees and their immediate family members with any type of personal problem(s) that may be affecting their life. The EAP is for all covered employees and their immediate family members, regardless of insurance coverage for family members. Contact Mutual of Omaha at 800-316-2796 for confidential counseling services. These EAP services are a free benefit to employees and their household members.

### **403b Tax Sheltered Savings Plans/457 Savings Plans**

Employees have the option to participate in multiple retirement savings programs as a means of personal savings and investments. The 403(b) and 457 payroll deductions reduce the employee's gross wages before any withholding tax is computed, thus reducing the amount of income tax the employee would normally pay to the IRS. The taxes are due when the saved

funds are withdrawn in future years. Employees are also eligible for Roth IRA contributions to their 403(b) and 457 savings plans. Roth IRA contributions are made post-tax, but money earned on those investments are not taxed when withdrawn in future years.

Enrollment is available at any time during the year is allowed for 403(b) Plans and 457 Plans. While there are IRS restrictions on withdrawals of funds, these plans are still an option for employees to save for retirement. Contact TCG Plan Administrators at 1-800-943-9179.

### **Credit Union**

The Gulf Coast Educators Federal Credit Union offers a variety of financial services to District employees and their immediate families. Contact the credit union in League City, Pasadena, or Pearland offices at (281)497-9333 or 1-8000-683-3863 for complete information on membership and benefits. You may also go online at [www.gcefcu.org](http://www.gcefcu.org).

### **Rosella Scott Gator Academy**

Rosella Scott Gator Academy, a childcare program for children six weeks to five years of age, is available for all district employees. The goal of the employee childcare is to provide children with an environment that is nurturing, safe, and clean, where children are encouraged to grow as unique individuals. The curriculum is in accordance with the criteria for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the highest national accreditation available for child day care providers. For questions regarding the childcare program, please feel free to call Janet Lopez, Director of Rosella Scott Gator Academy, (281)229-7930.

# Leaves and Absences

## *Policies DEC, DECA, DECB*

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

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

- Local Sick (Current)
- State Personal Business
- Previous Local Sick
- Previous State Personal Business
- Non-Contract

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

If an hourly employee does not report or request leave of absence(s) according to district procedures, the incident is considered a "no call/no show". An employee who is absent for 3 consecutive days without notice is considered to have abandoned their job and may face disciplinary consequences up to and including termination.

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

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

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

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

The district may require medical certification due to an employee’s questionable pattern of absences or when deemed necessary by the supervisor or superintendent. The district may also request medical certification when an employee requests leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for the employee’s serious health condition, a serious health condition of the employee’s spouse, parent, or child, or for military caregiver leave.

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

**Continuation of Health Insurance.** Employees, on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave, may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under the FMLA 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. Employees on unpaid leave have a grace period of 30-days in which to make premium payments. If payment is not made timely, your group health insurance may be cancelled, and the district reserves the right to recover these payments upon the following paycheck received by the employee.

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

## **Personal Leave**

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

general purposes: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

**Nondiscretionary.** Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. Reasons for this type of leave allows 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 five (5) days in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor.

- Discretionary leave may not last more than two (2) consecutive days (DEC Local).
- Discretionary leave shall not be allowed on the following days without prior approval from your Principal or Director:
  - The day preceding or following a school holiday,
  - The first or last day of a grading period,
  - Days schedule for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams,
  - Days scheduled for state-mandated assessments,
  - Professional/Staff Development days or Instructional Planning Days.

**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 and non-contract days (if applicable) 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 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

### **Sick Leave**

Sick leave may be used for personal illness, illness in the immediate family, family emergency, or other situations as permitted by policy.

### **Family Emergency**

The term “family emergency” shall be limited to natural and life-threatening situations involving the employee or a member of the employee’s immediate family.

### **Workday**

A workday for purposes of accumulation, use, or recording shall mean the number of hours per day equivalent to the employee’s usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time.

## **Local Leave**

In addition to state leave, each full-time employee shall earn an additional five to six and one-half workdays of local sick leave according to the following schedule:

Days of Contract	Number of Days Earned
234+	6.5
216-233	6.0
198-215	5.5
Less than 198	5.0

Local sick leave shall accumulate without limit and shall be taken with no loss of pay.

### **Patterns of Absence**

If an employee establishes a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or supervisor may inquire about the necessity of such absence and may require a doctor’s certification for any subsequent absence.

A note from a medical doctor may be required for any period of absence exceeding three consecutive days, or for any ongoing, occasional, or sporadic absences related to the same illness or condition.

Absence patterns on Monday and/or Friday, etc., may result in a request for a doctor’s certification.

Employees shall be charged leave even if a substitute is not employed.

Leave shall be recorded as follows, except in accordance with provision for intermittent leave in the Family and Medical Leave Act or when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits as provided in this policy:

1. For positions for which a substitute is normally required, leave shall be recorded in half-day increments, even if a substitute is not employed.
2. For positions for which a substitute is not normally required, leave shall be recorded in full-/half-/quarter-day increments.
3. If the employee is taking intermittent FMLA leave, leave shall be recorded in full-/half-/quarter-day increments.

### **Availability**

Leave shall not be approved for more workdays than have been accumulated in prior years plus those earned during the current year. Leave for the current year shall be available for use at the beginning of the school year. When an employee who has more leave than he or she has accumulated ceases to be employed by the District, the cost of the unearned leave days shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

### **Other Absences**

Any other absences granted, or days of absence shall result in a deduction of the daily rate for each day of absence, unless otherwise provided. [See DMS (LOCAL)]

### **Medical Certification**

A supervisor may request medical certification of illness and of the employee's fitness to return to work from employees with excessive absences and/or questionable absences, such as the day before or after a holiday, staff development days, days scheduled for exams or state testing, and personal business days previously denied. Medical certification shall be made by a health care provider as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act. [See DEC (LEGAL)]

Release after a work-related injury requiring a doctor's visit or return after five or more consecutive workdays of absence shall necessitate a doctor's release before return to work is allowed.

*Note: Senate Bill 1669 of the 78<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session provides employees with the right to use available local sick or personal leave when called to active military service.*



## **Vacation**

### *Policy DED*

A person employed by the District prior to September 1, 2001, in a position normally requiring 12 months (245 or more days) of service and who remains in a position normally requiring 12 months of service shall receive paid vacation days in accordance with the following:

1. An employee with 11 to 20 years of service in the District shall work 230 days of the 245-day calendar.
2. An employee with 21 or more years of service in the District shall work 225 days of the 245-day calendar.

All vacations days shall be used within the fiscal school year in which the vacation was earned. Vacation requests shall be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor.

On or after September 1, 2001, an employee hired into a position normally requiring 12 months of service, or any employee who is promoted, transferred, or reassigned to such a position for a position normally requiring less than 12 months of service, shall not receive paid vacations days. The employee shall be employed on a 235-day calendar.

Nonduty days shall not be carried over to any succeeding year. Requests for nonduty days shall be approved by the immediate supervisor of the requesting employee.

## **Gators Helping Gators**

### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

Dickinson ISD created the Catastrophic Leave Program titled, Gators Helping Gators, board approved on June 6, 2022 and remains in effect for each school year thereafter as provided herein. This is a voluntary program designed to aid employees who experience a catastrophic medical condition for themselves or for an immediate family member and who have insufficient leave to meet those circumstances extending beyond five (5) consecutive workdays. However, the District may consider any extenuating circumstances if the catastrophic medical condition is for less than five (5) consecutive workdays.

The creation of the catastrophic leave program does not, in any way, create a right or an entitlement to leave days by an applicant (employee) from the District or its employees. The number of days, if any, is solely dependent upon the goodwill of employee donors and will be limited to the number of days if any that are donated in accordance with the program process and procedures.

The existence and operation of the catastrophic leave program is subject to suspension or termination at any time if it is determined by the Superintendent that the financial condition of

the District so dictates. The program may also be suspended or terminated by the Superintendent if it is determined that the program is not operating as originally intended or is being abuse by one or more District employees. Any such termination or suspension shall not affect any employee that is already receiving donated leave at the time of the termination or suspension takes effect. All pending request that has not been approved at the time of the termination or suspension will be automatically rejected.

## **PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

A Dickinson ISD employee may apply to Gators Helping Gators if he or she meets all the following criteria:

1. Be a full or part-time employee. Part-time employees to be eligible must work a minimum of fifteen (15) hours per week. The catastrophic leave program is not applicable to substitute, temporary employees, or contract employees.
2. Be in good standing with the District. The catastrophic leave program will not apply to any employee that is subject to State or District disciplinary, suspension, non-renewal, or termination proceedings at the time the employee makes application to the leave program. The determination of such eligibility shall rest with the Dickinson ISD Human Resources Office.
3. Has been an employee for a minimum of one calendar year. A catastrophic medical condition that occurs during the first year of employment is not eligible for participation in the catastrophic leave program.
4. Has exhausted all leave available to the employee including, but not limited to existing local sick leave, state leave, or vacation days and comp time, if applicable.
5. The catastrophic medical condition for an employee or an immediate family member extends over five (5) consecutive workdays. However, an employee or employee's family representative can request the District to consider any extenuating circumstances if the catastrophic medical condition is for less than five (5) consecutive workdays.
6. The employee or the employee's immediate family member has a catastrophic illness, condition, or injury as those terms (immediate family member and medical condition) are defined below.

## **DEFINITIONS**

1. A catastrophic illness, injury is a severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family that requires the services of a licensed practitioner for a prolonged period of time and that forces the employee to exhaust all leave time earned by that employee and to lose compensation from the District. Such conditions typically require prolonged hospitalization or recovery or are expected to result in disability or death. Conditions relating to pregnancy or childbirth shall be considered catastrophic if they meet the requirements of this paragraph. (DEC Local)

Catastrophic conditions are additionally elaborated upon as follows:

- a. Serious debilitating illnesses, impairments, or physical/mental conditions that involves treatment in connection with a stay in a hospital, hospice, or other medical or residential facility. Conditions of mental illness can be considered when diagnosed by a license psychiatrist.
  - b. A high intensity/high frequency treatments necessary for a chronic or long-term condition that is so potentially life-threatening that, if not treated, would likely result in an extended period of incapacity or death.
  - c. Terminal illness
  - d. Conditions that are determined to be short term or normal/natural experiences are not considered catastrophic under the program. Such conditions include but are not limited to flu, childhood/adult diseases (measles, mumps, chicken pox, etc.), non-debilitating bone fractures, routine pregnancies/births, etc. Dickinson ISD reserves and retains the right to determine whether the illness or condition meets the foregoing definitions and criteria based on the information it receives from employee and his or her medical providers.
2. The term immediate family is defined as the spouse, children, parents, and any other person claimed as dependent on the employee's most recent tax return.
  3. It is permissible for one employee's spouse to donate leave to the other employee's spouse.
  4. A determination that the employee is eligible for light duty work will preclude the employee from applying to or continuing in the leave program unless the District determines it is unable to accommodate the light duty request.
  5. A medical physician is defined as a physician licensed by the appropriate medical board or licensing division of any state in the United States. Dickinson ISD reserves and retains the right to make the final determination as to who shall meet the definition of a medical physician.
  6. Dickinson ISD shall have the right to require the employee to submit to an independent medical examination at the time the employee makes a request to the catastrophic leave program or at any time the employee is an active participant in the catastrophic leave program.

## **APPLICATION AND DONATION PROCESS**

The operation of the catastrophic leave program shall be governed by the following additional terms and conditions:

1. The program does not apply to any employee who has sustained or suffered a work-related injury and is receiving workers' compensation income and benefits.
2. An employee may make a request per each health occurrence until the employee has reached the maximum of thirty (30) days per rolling 12-month period.
3. The maximum number of donated days a single employee may receive through this program is thirty (30) days, per rolling 12-month period as calculated from the date of the employee's last request to the program.
4. The maximum period of time that the employee can benefit from leave afforded by the District or by leave afforded by virtue of the catastrophic leave program is 180 calendar days

from the date when the illness, medical condition, or injury occurred. It is therefore incumbent upon the employee to make a request to the program as soon as it appears that the employee has a qualifying condition. The request must also be made in a reasonable amount of time after entering “docking mode” with payroll.

5. Employees may donate if he/she has an excess of ten (10) earned leave days at the time of donation. Leave donations will automatically default to be taken in the following order: Current Sick, Current Personal, Previous Sick, Previous Personal, and Non-contract. The donation will only roll to the next category if you have exhausted the previous category.
6. An employee may donate no more than four (4) leave days per school year – September 1 through August 31 – regardless of the number of potential donees.
7. An employee may donate no more than two (2) leave days per school year to a single donee.
8. The donation of leave is irrevocable and cannot be returned to the employee donor once the leave is transferred to the donee.
9. The donation of leave is personal to the donee and will not be accumulated for the benefit of other eligible employees. Any donated leave days not used for a particular donee shall be returned to the employee donor.
10. All leave will be donated anonymously; therefore, the names of donors will not be shared with the donee.
11. Notice of an employee’s request to the Gators Helping Gators program will be distributed in a manner deemed by Human Resources as being most effective. Among the methods to be considered will be district-wide e-mails, campus posting and the internet.
12. Any employee wishing to make a request to the program must use the form titled “Gators Helping Gators Request Form.” Human Resources may require additional supporting documentation and will so timely inform the employee. Such forms, together with any necessary supporting documentation, must be submitted to Human Resources promptly. Human Resources has the right to deny or delay the consideration of the request until such time as the supporting documentation is submitted.
13. Any employee wishing to donate must use the form titled “Gators Helping Gators Donation Form.” Such form must identify the name of the employee to receive the donation. All leave program forms are available through Talent ED and will be routed to Human Resources and Payroll for processing.
14. When the employee makes a request to the Gators Helping Gators program, he or she agrees to a disclosure of information about the illness, condition, or injury that is sufficient in detail to inform potential leave donors of the need for additional leave. To this end, the employee by virtue of signing and submitting their request releases and holds Dickinson ISD and its Board of Trustees, administrators, and employee harmless from any liability whatsoever as it relates in any manner to the publication of such information. The employee expressly waives any claim of confidentiality to such information whether such protection is afforded by the state or federal law. Human Resources will seek the employee’s approval on any information that is published when feasible.
15. Donation of leave days may be made any time the donee is eligible to participate in this program. For example, a donor may donate when the donee first becomes eligible or at a

later time when the donee is still eligible for leave under the program.

16. All decisions and determinations made with respect to the request of the catastrophic leave program shall rest with Human Resources. Appeals or grievances concerning such decisions shall be governed by the then existing Board Policies.
17. Direct solicitations of leave made by the donee to any potential donor are strongly discouraged. Inappropriate or unacceptable conduct or behavior by the donee can be reason for termination or exclusion from the leave program on a temporary or permanent basis.
18. The catastrophic leave program is not to exceed the employee's work calendar. Therefore, only paid workdays will be applied.
19. Employees receiving donated days, will receive 70% of their pay and 30% will go towards the cost of a substitute whether or not a substitute is employed or required for their position.

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

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

### What is FMLA leave?

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides eligible employees with **job-protected leave** for qualifying family and medical reasons.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) enforces the FMLA for most employees. Eligible employees can take **up to 12 workweeks** of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child with you,
- Your serious mental or physical health condition that makes you unable to work,
- To care for your spouse, child, or parent with a serious mental or physical health condition, and
- Certain qualifying reasons related to the foreign deployment of your spouse, child or parent who is a military servicemember.

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

You have the right to use FMLA leave in **one block of time**. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, you may take FMLA leave **intermittently in separate blocks of time, or on a reduced schedule** by working less hours each day or week. Read Fact Sheet

#28M(c) for more information.

Intermittent FMLA must be approved to the start of intermittent leave by the Human Resource Office. Intermittent FMLA must be recertified and reapproved every rolling six (6) months based on the prior approval date.

FMLA leave is **not paid leave**, but you may choose, or be required by your employer, to use any employer-provided paid leave if your employer's paid leave policy covers the reason for which you need FMLA leave.

### **Am I eligible to take FMLA leave?**

You are an **eligible employee** if *all* the following apply:

- You work for a covered employer,
- You have worked for your employer at least 12 months,
- You have at least 1,250 hours of service for your employer during the 12 months before your leave, and
- Your employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of your work location

You work for a **covered employer** if **one** of the following applies:

- You work for a private employer that had at least 50 employees during at least 20 workweeks in the current or previous calendar year,
- You work for an elementary or public or private secondary school, or
- You work for a public agency, such as a local, state, or federal government agency. Most federal employees are covered by Title II of the FMLA, administered by the Office of Personnel Management

### **How do I request FMLA leave?**

Generally, **to request FMLA leave you must:**

- Follow your employer's normal policies for requesting leave,
- Give notice at least 30 days before your need for FMLA leave, or
- If advance notice is not possible, give notice as soon as possible.

You **do not have to share a medical diagnosis** but must provide enough information to your employer so they can determine whether the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. You **must also inform your employer if FMLA leave was previously taken** or approved for the same reason when requesting additional leave.

Your **employer may request certification** from a health care provider to verify medical leave and may request certification of a qualifying exigency.

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

State employees may be subject to certain limitations in pursuit of direct lawsuits regarding leave for their own serious health conditions. Most federal and certain congressional employees are also covered by the law but are subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or Congress

### **What does my employer need to do?**

If you are eligible for FMLA leave, your employer **must**:

- Allow you to take job-protected time off work for a qualifying reason,
- Continue your group health plan coverage while you are on leave on the same basis as if you had not taken leave, and
- Allow you to return to the same job, or a virtually identical job with the same pay, benefits, and other working conditions, including shift and location, at the end of your leave.

Your **employer cannot interfere with your FMLA rights** or threaten or punish you for exercising your rights under the law. For example, your employer cannot retaliate against you for requesting FMLA leave or cooperating with a WHD investigation.

After becoming aware that your need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, your **employer must confirm whether you are eligible** or not eligible for FMLA leave. If your employer determines that you are eligible, **your employer must notify you in writing**:

- About your FMLA rights and responsibilities, and
- How much of your requested leave, if any, will be FMLA-protected leave?

### **Where can I find more information?**

Call **1-866-487-9243** or visit **dol.gov/fmla** to learn more.

If you believe your rights under the FMLA have been violated, you may file a complaint with WHD or file a private lawsuit against your employer in court. **Scan the QR code to learn about our WHD complaint process.**



## Local Procedures for Implementing Family and Medical Leave Provisions

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a “rolling” 12-month period measuring backward from the date of any FMLA leave usage.

**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 caregivers 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. Intermittent FMLA must be approved prior to the start of intermittent leave by the Human Resource Office. Intermittent FMLA must be recertified and reapproved every rolling six (6) months based on the prior approval date.

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

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

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

**Failure to Return.** If, at the expiration of FML, the employee is able to return to work but



chooses not to do so, the district may require the employee to reimburse the district's share of insurance premiums paid during any portion of FML when the employee was on unpaid leave. If the employee fails to return to work for a reason beyond the employee's control, such as a continuing personal or family serious health condition or a spouse being unexpectedly transferred more than 75 miles from the district, the district may not require the employee to reimburse the district's share of premiums paid.

**District Contact.** Employees that require FML or have questions should contact Morgan Ester, Benefits Coordinator for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **Temporary Disability Leave**

Any full-time employee 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. Employees have seven (7) calendar days to provide the required medical documentation in order to approve Temporary Disability Leave.

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, Morgan Ester, Benefits Coordinator 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.

**Certified Employees.** The District shall provide 180 calendar days of temporary disability leave for all SBEC certified employees.

**Non-Certified Employees.** The District shall provide 60 calendar days of temporary disability leave for all noncertified/auxiliary employees.

## **Workers' Compensation Benefits**

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

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

## **Assault Leave**

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

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

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

## **Leave for Bereavement**

Use of state leave and/or local sick leave for death in the immediate family shall not exceed five (5) workdays per occurrence, subject to the approval of the District. Absences that could exceed five (5) days will need to be submitted on a Supervisor Approval of Absence form.

## **Jury Duty**

*Policies DEC, DG*

The district provides paid leave to employees who are summoned to jury duty including service on a grand jury. The district will not discharge, threaten to discharge, intimidate, or coerce any regular employee because of juror or grand juror service or for the employee's attendance or scheduled attendance in connection with the service in any court in the United States.

Employees who report to the court for jury duty may keep any compensation the court provides. An employee should report a summons for jury duty to his or her supervisor as soon as it is received and may be required to provide the district a copy of the summons to document the need for leave.

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

## **Compliance with a Subpoena**

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

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.

## **Truancy Court Appearances**

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

## **Religious Observance**

The district will reasonably accommodate an employee's request for absence for a religious holiday or observance. Accommodations such as changes to work schedules or approving a day of absence will be made unless they pose an undue hardship to the district. The employee may

use any accumulated personal leave for this purpose. Employees who have exhausted applicable paid leave may be granted an unpaid day of absence.

## **Military Leave**

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

**Reemployment after Military Leave.** Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. Employees returning to work following military leave should contact Kimberly Rich, Executive Director of Human Resources. 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 Morgan Ester, Benefits Coordinator 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. Recognition and appreciation activities also include:

- **BIG Impact Award**
  - The BIG Impact Award is an employee recognition award given once per month to individuals who make an impact by going above and beyond the call of duty. Honorees are nominated by peers, supervisors, or community members.
- **Gator Heart**

- Gator Heart is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the impact volunteers have on Dickinson ISD. Service organizations, student organizations, parent groups, and individuals in the community willingly and graciously offer their time, talent, voice, and hearts to make an impact on the district.
- Blue and White Awards Banquet
  - Each year the Board recognizes the men and women who have contributed many years of service to the Dickinson school system. Awards are presented to those individuals celebrating their 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, and 50 years of service with DISD. Special recognition is given to DISD employees who have retired during the past year. Employee of the year awards are also presented.
- Teacher of the Year
  - Each year Region IV Education Service Center in cooperation with the Texas Education Agency holds the Teacher of the Year campaign in order to assist school districts in recognizing its exemplary teacher. The nomination and application processes are extensive and requires that candidates demonstrate service not only to students and education, but to their communities.
- Other Recognition
  - The District's administration is committed to publicizing and recording the numerous examples of educational quality in the DISD. The Public Information office can assist in recognizing achievement by disseminating news releases and photos to area newspapers and in the district newsletter, "Dialogue" and electronic newsletter, "Gator Bytes". Send student recognition information to the Public Information Office.

## **District Communications**

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

DISD keeps its employees and taxpayers well informed of events and achievements through a proactive two-way communication program. The Public Information office maintains a steady flow of news articles to the media, and the district newsletter "Dialogue" is mailed to all district residents twice a year informing the community of school news, events, and various activities. And electronic newsletter, "Gator Bytes", keeps parents, employees, and the community informed on a regular basis about district news. To sign up for this email newsletter visit our website at [www.dickinsonisd.org](http://www.dickinsonisd.org). Dickinson ISD also communicates on social media using platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Follow us on social media: <http://www.dickinsonisd.org/page/Social%20Media%20Links>

Parents may sign up for Family Access at their child's school. This program allows parents to go online and view their child's grades and attendance information on a daily basis. District information may be found on the DISD web page at [www.dickinsonisd.org](http://www.dickinsonisd.org).

The District's annual performance is summarized in the AEIS (Academic Excellence Indicator System) report. This report is available at each campus for review. Dickinson ISD seeks communication from input regarding the educational process through various community teams, advisory councils, and written suggestions.

## **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:

#### Complaints

In this policy, the terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning.

#### Other Complaint Processes

Employee complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies 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 resources shall be submitted in accordance with EF.
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.

### Notice to Employees

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

### Guiding Principles-Informal Process

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.

### Direct Communication with Board Members

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

### Formal Process

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.

### Freedom from Retaliation

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

### Whistleblower Complaints

Whistleblower complaint shall be filed within the time specified by law and may be made to the Superintendent or designed 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 Against Supervisors

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 of designee.

### General Provisions

A grievance must specify the individual harm alleged. An employee is prohibited from bringing separate or serial grievances regarding the same event or action. All time limits shall be strictly complied with unless modified by mutual consent.

Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication, including email and fax, or U.S. mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. 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 post-marked by U.S. mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three (3) days after the deadline.

### Consolidated Complaint

A grievance must specify the individual harm alleged. 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.

### Untimely Filings

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

If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the employee, at any point during the complaint process. The employee may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within ten (10) 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.

### Cost Incurred

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



### Definitions

For purposes of this policy, “days” shall mean working days on a regular school calendar, or regular business days when school is not in session, except as provided above [see WHISTLEBLOWER COMPLAINTS, above].

### Scheduling Conferences

Extenuating circumstances may allow the administration to schedule the meeting outside the parameters established by policy. It is not necessary to achieve a mutually acceptable date for the grievance meeting, but reasonable (at least three (3) days) notice must be given to allow the employee an opportunity to properly prepare for the meeting.

### Representative

“Representative” shall mean any person who or an organization that does not claim the right to strike and is designated by the employee to represent him or her in the complaint process. The employee may designate a representative through written notice to the District at any level of this process. The representative may participate in person or by telephone conference call. If the employee designates a representative with fewer than three (3) 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.

### Attendance

The person or person’s responsible for hearing the presentation of the grievance at any level shall make ruling on who may or may not be in attendance during the presentation:

1. If the presentation is at Level Three, during an open session of the Board, witnesses may be excluded from the presentation, except as they may be called to present.
2. At Level One, Level Two, or a closed meeting (or hearing officer) presentation, all persons except the grievant and his or her legal representative may be excluded. The representative may participate in person or by telephone conference call.
3. Final authority is delegated to the person or persons responsible for hearing the grievance when questions arise as to who may attend.

### Audio Recording

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

### Initiating Grievance

Unless otherwise specified in policy, an employee shall initiate a grievance as provided at LEVEL

ONE, below.

### **Level One**

An employee who has a grievance shall request a conference with the principal or immediate supervisor by submitting the grievance in writing, stating reasons for the grievance and the solution sought. Evidence, documentation, statements, and the like must accompany the grievance, along with a list of witnesses to be called to substantiate the complaint. The request must be filed within 15 days of the time the employee first knew or should have known of the event or series of events about which the employee is complaining.

For any complaint that has more involvement than an answer to a question or a single concern regarding an action of inaction of an employee or officer or the District, the complaint/grievance shall be submitted in written detail.

The written grievance shall be sufficiently detailed to include:

1. The specific complaint(s).
2. Alleged harm to the employee.
3. Brief summary of evidence and/or witness statements to be considered in reviewing the complaint/grievance.
4. Relief requested.

The principal or supervisor may set reasonable time limits for presentation of the grievance.

Witness statements or personal testimony of witnesses may be heard at Level One during the Level One conference.

The principal or supervisor shall schedule the conference within seven (7) days after receipt of the written request. The principal or supervisor shall have seven (7) days following the conference within which to respond.

Any response by the principal or supervisor shall be in writing.

### **Level Two**

If the outcome of the conference at Level One is not to the employee's satisfaction or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to discuss the grievance. The request shall be in writing on a form provided by the District and must be filed within seven (7) days following receipt of a written response of, if no written response is received, within seven (7) days or the response deadline.

For consideration at Level Two, the employee shall submit a copy of the original grievance/complaint along with a copy of the Level One response on the form provided by the District. Documentation/evidence not presented at Level One shall not be allowed or considered. The employee shall also specify:

1. Which portion of the original complaint remains unresolved.
2. Alleged harm to the employee of the unresolved portion of the complaint.
3. Brief summary of evidence and/or witness statements to be considered in reviewing the complaint/grievance at Level Two.
4. Relief requested.

The Superintendent or designee may set reasonable time limits for presentation of the grievance.

At Level Two, the superintendent or designee is not required to consider documentation not submitted at Level One, hear witnesses not previously heard, nor consider issues not previously submitted at Level One, nor any item not included in the written request for review at Level Two.

At Level Two, the Superintendent or designee shall not be obligated to contact witnesses outside the time allotted for the grievance presentation.

The Superintendent or designee shall schedule the conference within seven (7) days after receipt of the written request. The Superintendent or designee shall have seven (7) days following the conference within which to respond.

### **Level Three**

If the outcome of the conference at Level Two is not to the employee's satisfaction or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may request a review of the matter by the Board or Board's designee. The request shall be in writing on a form provided by the District and must be filed within seven (7) days following receipt of a written response or, if no written response is received, within seven (7) days of the response deadline. A schedule shall be set to allow presentation of the grievance at Level Three:

1. If by the Board's designee, within seven (7) days.
2. If by the Board, at the next available opportunity to schedule a properly called Board meeting.

The grieving party shall be notified of the date and time of the scheduled presentation at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled presentation unless it is mutually agreed to waive this provision.

### **If Heard by the Board**

The Board may set reasonable time limits. The proceeding before the Board shall be recorded by audiotape or court reporter. The Board is not required to consider documentation not previously submitted, hear witnesses not previously heard, nor consider issues not previously presented at a lower level. If the Board chooses to respond, it may announce its decision at a meeting or respond in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting (if more than seven days after the Level Three proceeding.) The lack of a

response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

#### If Heard by the Board's Designee

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board's designee with copies of the employee's original grievance, all responses, and any written documentation previously submitted by the employee and the administration. The Board's designee is not required to consider documentation not previously submitted or issues not previously presented.

The Level Three proceeding before the Board's designee shall be recorded by audiotape or court reporter. The Board's designee may set reasonable time limits. The Board's designee shall consider the grievance and may request a response from the administration.

#### Recommendation to the Board (if Heard at Level Three by a Designee)

The Board's designee shall make a recommendation to the Board at a regular meeting as soon thereafter as practicable. The proceeding before the Board shall be recorded by audiotape or court reporter.

The employee shall be provided a copy of the recommendation before the meeting and shall be given an opportunity at the meeting to respond, either orally or in writing, to the recommendation. The Board shall then make and communicate its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

#### Closed Meeting

If the grievance involves the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline. Or dismissal of the employee bringing the grievance, it may be heard by the Board in closed meeting unless the employee bringing the grievance requests that it be heard in public.

#### Exception

However, if the grievance involves a complaint or charge against another District employee or a Board member, it shall be heard in closed meeting unless an open meeting is requested in writing by the employee or Board member against whom the complaint or charge is brought.

# 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 up to and including termination.
- Know and comply with department and district policies and procedures.
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use district time, funds, and property for authorized district business and activities only.

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines, including intentionally making a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, up to and 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 94 for additional information.

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

## ***Texas Educators' Code of Ethics***

### **Purpose and Scope**

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

### **Enforceable Standards**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

## **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 up to and including termination.

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

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

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

The complete Board Policy Manual may be found on the Dickinson ISD website at [www.dickinsonisd.org](http://www.dickinsonisd.org) Click Board of Trustee – Board Policy. Browse Section D – Personnel and select DIA-Employee Welfare – Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation. **Local policy** will be found after the legal policy.

## **Harassment of Students**

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

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

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

All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect occurred 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 73 and *Bullying*, page 98 for additional information.

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

The complete Board Policy Manual may be found at the Dickinson ISD website at [www.dickinsonisd.org](http://www.dickinsonisd.org) Click Board of Trustees – Board Policy. Browse Section D – Personnel and select DF-Termination of Employment – Employee Welfare – freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation. **Local policy** will be found after the legal policy.

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

*Policies DG, FFG, GRA*

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

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

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made Online at <https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx> or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-

5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person or administrator to make the report.

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

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

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

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

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

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at [www.dickinsonisd.org](http://www.dickinsonisd.org). As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused 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 has reasonable cause to believe 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 following the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

## **Reporting Crime**

### *Policy DG*

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

## **Scope and Sequence**

### *Policy DG*

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

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

## **Technology Resources**

### *Policy CQ*

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

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

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

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

questions about computer use and data management can contact Caroline Lightfoot, Executive Director of Technology.

## **Personal Use of Electronic Communications**

*Policy CQ, DH*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### *Policy DH*

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

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

- The employee has provided the parent with a copy of this protocol.

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

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

- *Electronic communications* mean any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes email, text messages, instant messages, and any communication made through an Internet website, including a social media website or a social networking website.
- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*; however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.
- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

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

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

- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page ("professional page") for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee's professional page.
- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 4:45 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 DH]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with one or more currently enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through email, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.
- An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.
- All staff are required to use school email accounts for all electronic communications with parents. Communication about school issues through personal email accounts or text messages are not allowed as they cannot be preserved in accordance with the district's record retention policy.



- An employee shall notify his or supervisor in writing within one business day if a student engages in an improper electronic communication with the employee. The employee should describe the form and content of the electronic communication.

## **Public Information on Private Devices**

*Policy DH, GB*

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

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

## **Criminal History Background Checks**

*Policy DBAA*

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

## **Employee Arrests and Convictions**

*Policy DH, DHB, DHC*

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

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

Moral turpitude includes the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit

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

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

**Certified Employees.** The superintendent and directors are required to report the misconduct or criminal history of a certified employee or individual applying for certification or permit to TEA Division of Educator Investigations. Information about misconduct or allegations of misconduct of a certified employee obtained by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse that results in termination, resignation, or criminal history (e.g., arrest, indictment, prosecution, conviction, or other disposition by the criminal justice system, including probation and deferred adjudication) will be reported to TEA.

Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:

- Abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor
- Possessed, transferred, sold, or distributed a controlled substance
- Illegally transferred, appropriated, or expended school property or funds
- Attempted by fraudulent means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit to gain employment or additional compensation
- Committed a criminal offense on school property or at a school-sponsored event, or
- Solicited or engaged in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor

**Uncertified Employees.** Misconduct or criminal history of an uncertified employee also must be reported to TEA. Information about misconduct or the allegations of misconduct obtained by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse that results in termination, resignation, or criminal history (e.g., arrest, indictment, prosecution, conviction, or other disposition by the criminal justice system, including probation and deferred adjudication) will be reported to TEA.

Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:

- Abuse or unlawful act with a student or minor, or
- Involvement in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor

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

### *Policy DH*

Dickinson 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:

The complete Board Policy Manual may be found at the Dickinson ISD website at [www.dickinsonisd.org](http://www.dickinsonisd.org) Click on Board of Trustees – Board Policy. From the list of policies, choose Section D – Personnel. From the specific list of policies choose DH (Local) – Employee Standards of Conduct

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

### *Policies DH, FNCD, GKA*

State law prohibits smoking, using tobacco products and nicotine, 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.

Employees are prohibited from possessing or using any type of nicotine product, including nicotine pouches, regardless of whether the product contains tobacco, while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity. Exceptions may be made for smoking cessation products with supervisor approval.

## **Fraud and Financial Impropriety**

### *Policy CAA*

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

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial

document

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

## **Conflict of Interest**

### *Policy CB, DBD*

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

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

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

## **Gifts and Favors**

### *Policy DBD*

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

## **Copyrighted Materials**

### *Policy CY*

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

## **Associations and Political Activities**

### *Policy DGA*

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

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

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

## **Charitable Contributions**

### *Policy DG*

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

## **Safety and Security**

### *Policy CK series*

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety and security of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety and security program includes written guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. See Emergencies on page 87 for additional information.

Employees must follow established protocols and response to emergencies for each campus and department. Refer to written security procedures specific to your location and work area.

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

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact Robert Cobb, Assistant Superintendent for Administration.

## **Possession of Firearms and Weapons**

### *Policies DH, FNCG, GKA*

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

## **Visitors in the Workplace**

### *Policy GKC*

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

## **Asbestos Management Plan**

### *Policy CKA*

The district is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each school. A copy of the district's management plan is kept in the Operations and Facilities 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 the front entrance to the building. 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.

## **Dress and Grooming**

### *Policy DH (Local)*

As a representative of the district, employees are expected to dress in a manner that is professional and tasteful, not offensive, suggestive, revealing, or insulting to others. Employees are also expected to dress in a way that is not distracting to the educational experience.

*An employee's dress and grooming shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for his or her assignment, and in accordance with any additional standards established by this or her supervisor and approved by the Superintendent.*

All DISD employees should follow a minimum daily dress code best described as "business casual." For campus and office assignments, employees should project professional image. Employees with auxiliary

assignments may have variation based on their assigned duties and responsibilities; these variations will be communicated by each auxiliary director.

#### **Body Ornamentation and Piercings**

- Visible tattoos and similar body paintings/branding that promote violence, drugs, or alcohol or that reflect gang activity are prohibited.
- Visible tattoos and similar body paintings/brandings considered offensive, inflammatory, or disruptive are prohibited.
- Piercings are allowed as long as they are not distracting and do not cause a safety issue.

#### **Grooming/Essential Needs**

Personal hygiene is essential. Therefore, all employees must maintain a clean and presentable appearance, including regular bathing, use of deodorant and oral hygiene. Employees should wear appropriate undergarments.

## **General Procedures**

### **Emergency School Closing**

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

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| • I-45 NOW                     | <a href="http://www.facebook.com/i45NOW">www.facebook.com/i45NOW</a>                           |
| • Galveston County Daily News  | <a href="http://www.galvnews.com">www.galvnews.com</a>   |
| • Houston Chronicle            | <a href="http://www.chron.com">www.chron.com</a>   |
| • KPRC-TV (Channel 2 Houston)  | <a href="http://www.click2houston.com">www.click2houston.com</a>                               |
| • KHOU-TV (Channel 11 Houston) | <a href="http://www.khou.com">www.khou.com</a>   |
| • KTRK-TV (Channel 13 Houston) | <a href="http://www.abc13.com">www.abc13.com</a>   |
| • FOX Houston                  | <a href="http://www.fox26houstonnews.com">www.fox26houstonnews.com</a>                         |
| • Univision 45                 | <a href="http://www.univision.com/local/houston-kxln">www.univision.com/local/houston-kxln</a> |
| • KTMD Telemundo Houston       | <a href="http://www.telemundohouston.com">www.telemundohouston.com</a>                         |
| • KTRH 740 AM radio            |  |

#### **Communication:**

- Each campus/department should activate their Emergency Calling Tree.
- Information and instructions will be disseminated by telephone. Both employees and patrons will be advised regarding school and work schedules.



## **Emergencies**

*Policies CKC, CKD*

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

## **Purchasing Procedures**

*Policy CH*

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the Business Services department on an official district purchase order (PO) form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without a PO number. The district will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district's business office. Contact the campus principal or department director 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 Human Resources 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 by logging into Employee Access Center.

**The name on an employee's social security card will be the official name used on all records.**

Name changes are unable to be processed until the social security card and driver's license reflecting and updated name are submitted to Human Resources for verification. Once the name change procedures are complete Human Resources will notify all required parties.

## **Personnel Records**

*Policy DBA, GBA*

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

Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

- Address

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

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

## **Employment Verification**

### *Policies DBA, GBA*

Employment and wage verification requests are often triggered by an employee's life events, such as buying a home, opening a credit card, applying for government assistance, loan forgiveness, or leasing an apartment. These requests need to be handled quickly, securely, and accurately. Dickinson ISD is pleased to provide our employees with an automated verification platform called VeriSafe Jobs. Employees will now have visibility into the entire verification process, ensuring data transparency and accessibility. This platform also provides employees the power to approve verification inquiries and monitor the status of their verification request right from their phone or computer. Please note that to make this service available, the District must disclose employee data, including social security numbers and other confidential information to the service provider for this purpose. Employees may control any further disclosure of this information through the VeriSafe platform located at <https://myaccount.verisafejobs.com/index.html>. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these disclosures, please contact Trish Andersen, Director of Human Resources, or VeriSafe Jobs at (833) 883-7439; [voe@VeriSafeJobs.com](mailto:voe@VeriSafeJobs.com)

## **Facility Use**

### *Policies DGA, GKD*

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. Operations and Facilities is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact Wendy Haywood, Director of Custodial Services to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

# Staff Meal Charges

## DICKINSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

### FACULTY AND STAFF MEAL CHARGE AND COLLECTION POLICY/PROCEDURE

	School Faculty & Staff	School Substitutes
<b>Amount of Outstanding Charges Permitted</b>	Staff are allowed one charge on their account: breakfast or lunch	
<b>Methods of Notification to Faculty and Staff about their negative Account Balances</b>	Verbal Reminders given daily by Cashiers to Faculty and Staff at check out about any outstanding charges.  Personal account printouts will be placed in their mailbox each week or month and/or email will be sent. If charges do not get taken care of then the Principal will be notified, and no more charges will be allowed until prior charges have been paid.	Substitute Employees working in the district are not allowed to charge a meal in our district at any of our school locations.

- Negative meal balances for Faculty and Staff will be transferred to the district business office at the end of each school year.
  - Employees must pay the business office if they wish to clear these charges.
- Any unpaid balances at the end of the school year of current staff or the termination of employment will be subject to payroll deduction per school district business office.
- Manager will notify Principals at the end of each month if campus teacher and staff accounts are unpaid.

Nondiscrimination statement reads as follows: In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

# Termination of Employment

## Resignations

*Policy DFE, DHB*

**Contract Employees.** Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received at least 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the superintendent or other persons designated by the board of trustees, which includes superintendent or other persons designated by the board or trustees, which included Human Resources. Supervisors who have not been designated by the board to accept resignations shall instruct the employee to submit the resignation to the superintendent or other person designated by board action.

Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the superintendent or the board of trustees. Resignation without consent may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's resignation within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in *Reports to Texas Education Agency* on page 94. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and there is evidence to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

**Noncontract Employees.** Noncontract employees may resign their position at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to 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.

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

## Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

*Policies DF Series, DHB*

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be nonrenewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against

them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The timelines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee.

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

Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when the employee's certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the timelines and procedures can be found in the DF series policies that are provided to employees or are available Online.

## **Dismissal of Noncontract Employees**

### *Policies DCD, DP*

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See *Complaints and Grievances*, page 61.)

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

## **Discharge of Convicted Employees**

### *Policy DF*

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

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

## Exit Interviews and Procedures

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

## Reports to Texas Education Agency

*Policies DF, DHB, DHC*

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

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

The reporting requirements above are in addition to the superintendent's ongoing duty to notify TEA when a certified employee or an applicant for certification has a reported criminal history or engaged in conduct violating the assessment security procedures established under TEC §39.0301. "Reported criminal history" means any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions including arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal information, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction that is obtained by a means other than the Fingerprint-based Applicant Clearinghouse of Texas (FACT).

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

## Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

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

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

## Student Issues

### Equal Educational Opportunities

*Policies FB, FFH*

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination against students based on sex, including sexual harassment should be directed to *Robert Cobb, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, 2218 FM 517 East, Dickinson, TX 77539, [rcobb@dickinsonisd.org](mailto:rcobb@dickinsonisd.org), (281)229-6102*, the district Title IX coordinator for students.

Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to *Maggie Burk, Coordinator of Evaluation & Related Services, 2218 FM 517 East, Dickinson, TX 77539, [mburk@dickinsonisd.org](mailto:mburk@dickinsonisd.org), (281) 229-6094* the district ADA/Section 504 coordinator for students. All other questions or concerns relating to discrimination based on any other reasons should be directed to the Superintendent.

### Student Records

*Policy FL*

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

- Parents: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating

parental rights

- The student: The rights of parents transfer to a student who turns 18 or is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. A district is not prohibited from granting the student access to the student's records before this time.
- School officials with legitimate educational interests

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

## **Parent and Student Complaints**

### *Policy FNG*

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

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

## **Administering Medication to Students**

### *Policy FFAC*

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

## **Dietary Supplements**

### *Policies DH, FFAC*

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



## **Psychotropic Drugs**

### *Policy FFAC*

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

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

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

## **Student Conduct and Discipline**

### *Policies in the FN series and FO series*

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

## **Student Attendance**

### *Policy FEB*

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

## **Bullying**

### *Policy FFI*

Bullying is defined by §TEC 37.0832. All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying, including cyberbullying, to Robert Cobb, Assistant Superintendent for Administration. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and will be found on the district website, [www.dickinsonisd.org](http://www.dickinsonisd.org).

## **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.