



Vidor Independent School District
2009-2010
Employee Handbook

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Employee handbook receipt.....	5
District information	6
Board of trustees	6
Administration	6
Helpful contacts	7
School directors	7
Employment.....	8
Equal employment opportunity	8
Job vacancy announcements.....	8
Employment after retirement.....	8
Contract and noncontract employment.....	8
Searches and alcohol and drug testing.....	9
Health safety training.....	10
Reassignments and transfers.....	11
Workload and work schedules.....	11
Notification to parents regarding qualifications	12
Outside employment and tutoring	12
Performance evaluation	12
Employee involvement	13
Staff development.....	13
Compensation and benefits	13
Salaries, wages, and stipends.....	13
Annualized compensation.....	14
Paychecks	15
Automatic payroll deposit	15
Payroll deductions.....	15
Overtime compensation	16
Travel expense reimbursement.....	16
Health, dental, and life insurance	17
Supplemental insurance benefits	17
Cafeteria plan benefits (Section 125)	17
Workers' compensation insurance.....	18
Unemployment compensation insurance.....	18
Teacher retirement.....	18
Leaves and absences	19
Personal leave	19
Sick leave.....	20
Local leave.....	20
Family and medical leave (FMLA)	23
Temporary disability leave	26
Workers' compensation benefits	27
Assault leave.....	27

Jury duty	27
Other court appearances	28
Military leave.....	28
Employee relations and communications	28
Employee recognition and appreciation	28
District communications.....	29
Complaints and grievances	29
Employee conduct and welfare.....	29
Standards of conduct	29
Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation	32
Harassment of students.....	32
Alcohol and drug-abuse prevention.....	33
Reporting suspected child abuse.....	33
Fraud and financial impropriety	34
Conflict of interest.....	34
Gifts and favors	35
Associations and political activities	35
Safety.....	35
Tobacco use.....	36
Criminal history background checks	36
Employee arrests and convictions	36
Possession of firearms and weapons	37
Visitors in the workplace.....	37
Copyrighted materials.....	37
Computer use and data management.....	37
Asbestos management plan	38
Pest control treatment	38
General procedures.....	38
Bad weather closing.....	38
Emergencies.....	39
Purchasing procedures.....	39
Name and address changes.....	39
Personnel records.....	39
Building use.....	40
Termination of employment	40
Resignations.....	40
Dismissal or nonrenewal of contract employees	40
Dismissal of noncontract employees	41
Exit interviews and procedures.....	41
Reports to State Board for Educator Certification.....	41
Reports concerning court-ordered withholding.....	42
Student issues	42
Equal educational opportunities	42
Student records	42
Parent and student complaints.....	43

Administering medication to students	43
Dietary supplements	43
Psychotropic drugs	43
Student discipline	44
Student attendance.....	44
Bullying	44
Hazing.....	44
Index.....	46

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 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 on line at www.vidorisd.org.

Employee handbook receipt

Name _____

Campus/department _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Vidor 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. Electronic format is available at www.vidorisd.org under “staff”.

Please indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box below:

- I choose to receive the employee handbook in electronic format and accept responsibility for accessing according to the instructions provided.
- I choose to receive a hard copy of the employee handbook.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this booklet. 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.

Signature

Date

Note: You have been given two copies of this form. Please sign and date one and keep it. Sign and date the other copy and forward it to Principal or Supervisor.

District information

Board of trustees

Policies BA, BB, BD, 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 law and regulations.

The board of trustees is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the district's children. Trustees are elected by position and serve three -year terms. Trustees serve without compensation, must be registered voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include: Mrs. Sheila Sarver, Mr. David Camp, Mr. Mike Kilmer, Mr. Rollie Burr, Mr. Eddy Byerly, Mr. Tim Harland, and Mr. Tim Rainbolt.

The board usually meets the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted at the VISD Administration Building at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

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

Administration

Dr. Joe Burns, Superintendent

Willie Hayes, Executive Director of Human Resources

Johnny Ross, Executive Director for Alternative Education

D'Lana Barbay, Executive Director of Elementary Education

Linda Adams, Executive Director of Secondary Education

David Edgar, Chief Financial Officer

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.

Debbie Gier State Programs and Assessment	951-8752
Jim Gordon, Instructional Technology	951-8753
Suzanne Wojtowich, Federal Programs	951-8708
Barbara Smith, Special Education	951-8710
Robert Godeaux, Support Services	951-8770
Sally Andrews, Community Education/ACE	951-8700
Terri Roye, PEIMS / Student Accounting	951-8716
Ronnie Davis, Maintenance	951-8740
Grace Clark, Food Services	951-8712
Jeanne Taylor, Transportation	951-8760
Andrea Ricks, Employee Benefits	951-8721

School directors

Vidor High School, Jay Killgo Principal	951-8900
Alternative Education, Johnny Ross, Executive Dir.....	951-8784
Vidor Junior High, Debra Jordan, Principal	951-8970
Vidor Middle School, Nancy Smith, Principal	951-8880
Pine Forest Elementary, Roxanne Manuel, Principal	951-8800
Oak Forest Elementary, Jami Poteet, Principal	951-8860
Vidor Elementary, Linda Durmon, Principal.....	951-8830

Employment

Equal employment opportunity

Policies DAA, DIA

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

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or military status should contact the superintendent or Executive Director of Human Resources, the district's Title IX coordinator. Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should contact Coordinator of Special Education.

Job vacancy announcements

Policy DC

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are distributed on a regular basis and posted on the district's Web site.

Employment after retirement

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed in limited 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 Web Site (www.trs.state.tx.us).

Contract and noncontract employment

Policies DC, DCA, DCB, DCC, DCD, DCE

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

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

Probationary contracts are one-year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed 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 may 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 and continuing contracts. Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification and nurses will be employed by term contract 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 and employment policies.

Term contracts governed by Chapter 21 of the Education Code (educator term contracts) shall be provided to:

1. SBEC-certified employees serving full-time as principals, assistant principals, teachers, counselor, diagnosticians, librarians, and the athletic director; and
2. Full-time nurses.

Educator term contracts not governed by Chapter 21 of the Education Code shall be provided also for the following positions for which neither SBEC nor the District requires current SBEC certification: Chief Financial Officer and Auxiliary Directors.

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.

Searches and alcohol and drug testing

Policy DHE

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

The District reserves the right to conduct searches when the District has reasonable cause to believe that a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct. The District may search the employee, the employee's personal items, work areas, lockers, and private vehicles parked on District premises or worksites or used in District business.

Employees required to have a commercial driver's license. Any employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to drug and alcohol testing.

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

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted if 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 is otherwise subject to alcohol and drug testing will receive a copy of the district's policy, the testing requirements, and detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse and the availability of assistance programs. Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact Superintendent's office.

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), and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, University Interscholastic League, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to immediate Supervisor by first day of school or first day of activity.

A District employee who serves as head director of a school marching band, head coach, or chief sponsor of an extracurricular athletic activity (including cheerleading) that is sponsored or sanctioned by the District or UIL must maintain and submit to the District proof of current certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provided equivalent training and certification. The District shall adopt procedures for administering this requirement, including procedures for the time and manner in which proof of current certification must be submitted. *Education Code 33.086*

Each school nurse, assistant school nurse, athletic coach or sponsor, physical education instructor, marching band director, cheerleading coach, and any other employee specified by the Commissioner must receive and maintain certification in the use of an AED from the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, or a similar nationally recognized association. *Education Code 22.902*

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 August 1st. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Superintendent's office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

Workload and work schedules

Policies DEA, 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 required days of service 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. 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 will be notified of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees are not exempt from

overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor.

Notification to parents regarding qualifications

Policies DK, DBA

In schools receiving Title I funds, the district is required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. NCLB also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Texas law also requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notification under NCLB is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) or 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 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

Policies DN, DNA, DNB

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

District teachers shall be appraised annually, except teachers who are eligible for less frequent evaluations in accordance with law and the following local criteria. The eligible teacher shall:

1. Receive at least an exceeds expectations rating in all domains for the previous year
2. Be on a term contract for 2 years or more
3. Not be new to the campus
4. Not be new to the teaching assignment
5. Be SBEC Certified and Highly Qualified
6. Complete other aspects of PDAS including orientation and teacher self reports
7. Sign an agreement each year of eligibility for less-than-annual appraisals.

Employee involvement

Policies BQA, BQB

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

Staff development

Policy DMA

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

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

Compensation and benefits

Salaries, wages, and stipends

Policy DEA

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and a pay structure established for each position. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional 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 overtime hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek.

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 Executive Director of Human Resources for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

Annualized compensation

Policy DEA

The district pays all salaried employees over 12 months regardless of the number of months employed during the school year. Salaried employees will be paid in equal monthly or bimonthly payments, beginning with the first pay period of the school year. Employees that separate after the last day of instruction will continue to receive paychecks through the end of the summer.

If a salaried employee separates from service before the last day of instruction, the employee shall receive in his or her final paycheck the unpaid amount the employee has actually earned from the beginning of the 12-month pay period until the date of separation. For purposes of this policy, "separation from service" shall be as defined in IRS regulation 26 CFT 7.409A-1(h).

A salaried employee who separates from service on or after the last day of instruction shall be paid as follows"

1. An employee who is retiring under the Texas Teacher Retirement System shall receive in his or her final paycheck the unpaid amount the employee has actually earned from the beginning of the 12-month pay period until the date of separation. If the employee is eligible and elects to continue enrollment in the District's group health coverage for one or more months of the summer, the employee's share of premiums shall be withheld from the final paycheck.
2. An employee who requests a lump sum payment shall receive in his or her final paycheck the unpaid amount the employee has actually earned.
3. All other employees shall be paid according to the annualized salary provisions above.

Paychecks

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

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

The schedule of pay dates for the 2009–2010 school year follows:

September 15 and 30, 2009
October 15 and 30, 2009
November 13 and 30, 2009
December 15 and 18, 2009
January 15 and 29, 2010
February 15 and 26, 2010
March 15 and 31, 2010
April 15 and 30, 2010
May 14 and 28, 2010
June 15 and 30, 2010
July 15 and 29, 2010
August 13 and 31, 2010

Automatic payroll deposit

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

Payroll deductions

Policy CFEA

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

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

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for health, dental, life, and vision insurance; annuities; and higher education savings plans. Employees also may request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations, _United Way, VISD Scholarship Fund, Vidor Teacher's Federal Credit Union, Alternative Certification Programs, and court

ordered garnishments.. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Overtime compensation

Policy DEA

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

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:00 a.m. Sunday and ends at 11:59 p.m. Saturday. .

Employees may be compensated for overtime at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay. At the District's option, nonexempt employees may receive compensatory time off, rather than overtime pay, for overtime work. The employee shall be informed in advance if overtime hours will accrue compensatory time rather than pay.

Compensatory time earned by nonexempt employees may not accrue beyond a maximum of 60 hours. If an employee has a balance of more than 60 hours of overtime, the employee will be required to use compensatory time or, at the District's option, will receive overtime pay.

Compensatory time may be used at either the employee's or the District's option. An employee may use compensatory time in accordance with the District's leave policies and if such use does not unduly disrupt the operations of the District. [See DEC(LOCAL)] The District may require an employee to use compensatory time when in the best interest of the District.

Travel expense reimbursement

Policy DEE

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

Health, dental, and life insurance

Policy CRD

Group health insurance coverage is provided through TRS-ActiveCare, the statewide public school 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 regularly scheduled to work at least 10 hours per week

TRS retirees who are enrolled in TRS-Care (retiree health insurance program) and employees who are not contributing TRS members who are regularly scheduled to work less than 10 hours per week 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 spring. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact Employee Benefits for more information.

Supplemental insurance benefits

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for disability, life, accidental death and dismemberment. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact Employee Benefits for more information.

Cafeteria plan benefits (Section 125)

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis (i.e., health, dental, vision, cancer, accident, heart and stroke and reimbursement accounts). 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, effective date of hire. 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 Principal or Department Supervisor. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code.

Unemployment compensation insurance

Policy CRF

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. 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 Employee Benefits.

Teacher retirement

Policy DEG

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify TRS as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits 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.state.tx.us .

Leaves and absences

Policy 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 Campus Principal or Department Supervisor for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums, and requirements for communicating with the district.

Leave is available for the employee's use at the beginning of the school year. However, state personal and local sick leave is earned only when the employee is in a paid status. If an employee leaves the district before the end of the work year, the cost of any unearned leave days taken shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

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 employee who is absent more than 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.

Employees on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the district as they were prior to the leave. Otherwise, the district does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave.

Personal leave

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is earned at a rate of 1 day per 35 days. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts and generally transfers to education service centers. There are two types of personal leave: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

Nondiscretionary. Leave that is 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 advanced planning. Nondiscretionary leave will be granted to employees in the same manner as state sick leave.

Discretionary. Leave that is taken at an employee's discretion and that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor 3 days in

advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor. Discretionary leave shall not exceed 3 consecutive workdays.

Sick leave

Previously accumulated state sick leave is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State sick leave can be used only in 1/2 day increments except when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis or when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

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

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

Local leave

All employees shall earn five workdays of paid local leave per school year in accordance with administrative regulations.

Local leave shall accumulate to a maximum of 75 workdays

Local leave shall be used according to the terms and conditions of state personal leave.

Local leave may also be used for well-baby care within the first year after birth, adoption, or placement of a child.

Extended Sick Leave After all available state and local leave days have been exhausted a full-time employee shall be granted in a school year a maximum of 20 workdays of extended sick leave to be used for the employee's personal illness or injury, including pregnancy-related illness or injury, or for absences related to the illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family.

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

For professional employees, the average daily rate of pay of a substitute shall be deducted for each day of extended sick leave taken, whether or not a substitute is employed. For employees other than professionals, an amount equal to one-third the individual employee's daily rate of pay shall be deducted for each day of extended sick leave taken.

Sick Leave Pool

An employee who has exhausted all paid leave and who suffers from a catastrophic illness or injury or is absent due to the catastrophic illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family may request the establishment of a sick leave pool, to which District employees may donate only local leave for use by the eligible employee. If the employee is unable to submit the request, a member of the employee's family or the employee's supervisor may submit the request to establish a sick leave pool.

The pool shall cease to exist when the employee no longer needs leave for the purpose requested, uses the maximum number of days allowed under a pool, or exhausts all leave days donated to the sick leave pool

The Superintendent or designee shall develop regulations for the implementation of the sick leave pool that address the following:

1. Procedures to request the establishment of a sick leave pool;
2. The maximum number of days an employee may donate to a sick leave pool;
3. The maximum number of days per school year an eligible employee may receive from a sick leave pool; and
4. The return of unused days to donors.

Appeal All decisions regarding the establishment or implementation of the District's sick leave pool may be appealed in accordance with DGBA(LOCAL), beginning with the Superintendent or designee.

Family and Medical Leave Twelve-Month Period For purposes of an employee's entitlement to FMLA, the 12-month period shall be September 1 through August 1.

Combined Leave for Spouses If both spouses are employed by the District, the District shall limit FMLA leave for the birth, adoption, or placement of a child, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition, to a combined total of 12 weeks. The District shall limit military caregiver leave to a combined total of 26 weeks. [See DECA(LEGAL)]

Intermittent or Reduced Schedule Leave The District shall permit use of intermittent or reduced schedule FMLA leave for the care of a newborn child or for the adoption or placement of a child with the employee [See DECA(LEGAL) for use of intermittent or reduced schedule leave due to a medical necessity.]

Certification of Leave If an employee requests leave, the employee shall provide certification, as required by FMLA regulations, of the need for leave. [See DECA(LEGAL)]

Fitness for Duty Certification If an employee takes FMLA leave due to the employee's own serious health condition, the employee shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification. If the District will require certification of the employee's

ability to perform essential job functions, the District shall provide a list of essential job functions to the employee with the FMLA designation notice.

End of Semester Leave If a teacher takes leave near the end of the semester, the District may require the teacher to continue leave until the end of the semester. [See DECA(LEGAL), LEAVE AT THE END OF A SEMESTER]

Failure to Return If, at the expiration of FMLA leave, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the District may require reimbursement of premiums paid by the District during the leave. [See DECA(LEGAL), RECOVERY OF BENEFIT COST]

Temporary Disability Leave Any full-time employee whose position requires educator certification by the State Board for Educator Certification or by the District shall be eligible for temporary disability leave. The maximum length of temporary disability leave shall be 180 calendar days [See DBB(LOCAL) for temporary disability leave placement and DEC(LEGAL), for reinstatement].

An employee's notification of need for extended absence due to the employee's own medical condition shall be forwarded to the Superintendent or designee as a request for temporary disability.

Workers' Compensation *Note: Workers' compensation is not a form of leave. The workers' compensation law does not require the continuation of the District's contribution to health insurance. [See CRD(LOCAL) regarding payment of insurance contribution during employee absences.]*

An absence due to a work-related injury or illness shall be designated as FMLA leave, temporary disability leave, and/or assault leave, as applicable.

Paid Leave Offset An employee eligible for workers' compensation income benefits, and not on assault leave, may elect in writing to use available partial-day increments of paid leave to make up the difference between the employee's income benefits and the pre-injury wage,. [See CRE]

Court Appearances Absences due to compliance with a valid subpoena or for jury duty shall be fully compensated by the District and shall not be deducted from the employee's pay or leave balance.

Reimbursement of Leave Upon Retirement The following leave provisions shall apply to local leave earned beginning on the original effective date of this program.

An employee who separates from employment with the District shall be eligible for reimbursement of local leave under the following conditions:

1. The employee's separation from employment is voluntary, i.e. the employee is retiring and is not being discharged or nonrenewed.

2. The employee provides advance written notice of intent to separate from employment.
3. The employee has at least one year of service with the District.
4. The employee has at least one day of available local leave.

The employee shall be reimbursed for each day of local leave, to a maximum of 75 days, at a rate established by the Board. If the employee is reemployed with the District, days for which the employee received payments shall not be available to that employee.

The rate established by the Board shall be in effect until the Board adopts a new rate. Any changes to the rate shall apply beginning with the school year following the adoption of the rate change.

Family and medical leave (FMLA)

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

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

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

Military Family Leave Entitlements. Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions,

the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

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

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

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

Enforcement. An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer. FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

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

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

Local FMLA Provisions

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period beginning September 1 through August 31.

Use of paid leave. Family and medical leave 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 family and medical leave, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

Combined leave for spouses. A husband and wife who are both employed by the district are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of FMLA leave to care for a parent with a

serious health condition; or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. Military caregiver leave for spouses is limited to a combined total of 26 weeks.

Intermittent leave. When medically necessary or in the case of a qualifying exigency, an employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule. The district shall permit the use of intermittent or reduced-schedule leave for the care of a newborn child or for adoption or placement of a child with the employee.

District contact. Employees that require FMLA leave or have questions should contact Employee Benefits for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Temporary disability leave

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

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. An employee's notification of need for extended absence due to the employee's own medical condition shall be accepted as a request for temporary disability leave. The request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days. If disability leave is not approved, the employee must return to work or be subject to termination procedures.

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

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

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 available, partial-day increments of sick leave or any other paid leave benefits to make up the difference between wage benefits and pre-injury or –illness wages. While an employee is receiving workers' compensation wage benefits, the district will charge available leave proportionately so that the employee receives an amount equal to the employee's regular salary.

Assault leave

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

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

Jury duty

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

Other court appearances

Employees will be granted paid leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding. Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

Military leave

Paid leave for military service. Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, or reserve component of the United States Armed Forces will be granted a paid leave of absence without loss of any accumulated leave for authorized training or duty orders. Paid military leave will not exceed 15 days each federal fiscal year (October 1–September 30). 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 state military duty (Texas National Guard or Texas State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed in the position they would have held if employment had not been interrupted or reassigned to an equivalent or similar position provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment to the Superintendent.

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

Employee relations and communications

Employee recognition and appreciation

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities also include District Employee of the Month, Region V Teacher of the Year, Excellence in Education Awards along with Vidor Schools Foundation Awards.

District communications

Throughout the school year, the Community Education 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: The Update, Community Education Fall and Spring Class Catalog, and Ed2Go.

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 can be found at www.vidorisd.org.

Employee conduct and welfare

Standards of conduct

Policy DH

All District employees shall perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, District policy, and ethical standards.

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

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

Employees shall comply with the standards of conduct set out in policy, regulations, and guidelines that impose duties, requirements, or standards attendant to their status as District employees. Violation of any policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

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

1. Other employees,
2. Students.

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

Employees shall not form romantic or other inappropriate social relationships with students. Any sexual relationship between a student and a District employee is always prohibited, even if consensual.

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

Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

Statement of Purpose

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

Professional Standards

1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 2.7 The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC under this chapter.

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

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

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

Standard 3.3 The educator shall not deliberately or knowingly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

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

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

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

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

Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation

Policies DH, DIA

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

Employees who believe they have been 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 employee should report the complaint directly to the superintendent. A complaint against the superintendent may be made directly to the board.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation found at www.vidorisd.org, Policy DIA(LOCAL)

Harassment of students

Policies DH, FFG, FFH

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows

of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students is found at www.vidorisd.org, Policy DF(LEGAL) and FFH(LOCAL)..

Alcohol and drug-abuse prevention

Policies DH, DI

Vidor 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: Policy DH(LOCAL), DI (Exhibit) at www.vidorisd.org .

Reporting suspected child abuse

Policies DF, DG, DH, FFG, GRA

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

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

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

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

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

Fraud and financial impropriety

Policy CAA

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

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

Conflict of interest

Policies BBFA, DBD

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

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

Gifts and favors

Policy DBD

An employee shall not use his or her position with the District to attempt to sell products or services.

An employee shall disclose in writing to his or her immediate supervisor any private tutoring of District students for pay.

Employees may not accept gifts or favors that could influence, or be construed to influence, the employee's discharge of assigned duties. The acceptance of a gift, favor, or service by an administrator or teacher that might reasonably tend to influence the selection of textbooks may result in 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.

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.

Safety

Policy CK

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

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact Superintendent's office.

Tobacco use

Policies DH, GKA, FNCD

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

Criminal history background checks

Policy DBAA

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

Employee arrests and convictions

Policy DH

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

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

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

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft

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

Possession of firearms and weapons

Policies FNCG, GKA

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisors or call Vidor ISD Police at 951-8966 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.

Copyrighted materials

Policy EFE

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.). Rented videotapes are to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or backup of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

Computer use and data management

Policy CQ

Access to the District's electronic communications system, including the Internet, shall be made available to students and employees exclusively for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations. No personal use of the system shall be permitted.

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

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

Asbestos management plan

Policy CKA

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

Pest control treatment

Policy DI, CLB

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

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located at front entrances. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

General procedures

Bad weather closing

The district may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late or to release students early, the following radio and television stations will be notified by school officials: Television, KFDM, Channel 6; KBMT, Channel 12, and KBTB, Channel 4, Radio station KLVI. Employees are contacted through the automated phone call system, AlertNow.

Emergencies

Policy CKC

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

Purchasing procedures

Policy CH

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the warehouse 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 Business Office for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Name and address changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Human Resource office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, home telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. Forms to process a change in personal information can be obtained from Human Resource office.

Personnel records

Policy GBA

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

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

The choice to not allow public access to this information may be done at any time by submitting a written request to Human Resource office. New or terminating employees have

14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information will be released to the public.

Building use

Policies DGA, GKD

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. Community Education Department is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact Director of Community Education to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

Termination of employment

Resignations

Policy DFE

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

The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the acts listed in Reports to the State Board for Educator Certification, on page 41

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

Dismissal or nonrenewal of contract employees

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

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

policies that are provided to employees or in the policy manuals located in Superintendent's office.

Dismissal of noncontract employees

Policy DCD

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, religion, sex, national origin, disability, military status, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. 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 29)

Exit interviews and procedures

Policy DC

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

Reports to State Board for Educator Certification

Policy DF

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

- A reported criminal history
- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other illegal conduct with a student or a minor
- Soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct 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 school property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle the individual to a professional position or to receive additional compensation associated with a position
- Committing a crime on school property or at a school-sponsored event
- Violating assessment instrument security procedures

Reports concerning court-ordered withholding

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

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

Student issues

Equal educational opportunities

Policies FB, FFH

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination against students on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin should be directed to the superintendent or Executive Director of Human Resources, the district's Title IX coordinator. Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to Coordinator of Special Education.

Student records

Policy FL

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records. The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records: Parents Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights

The student (if 18 or older or emancipated by a court)
School officials with legitimate educational interests

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

Parent and student complaints

Policy FNG

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

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teachers or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved 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 can administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. A student who must take medication during the school day must bring a written request from his or her parent and the medicine, in its original, properly labeled container. Contact the principal or school nurse for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

Dietary supplements

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 discipline

Policies in the FN series and FO series

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

Student attendance

Policy FEB

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

Bullying

Policy FFI

All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying to campus principal or designee. The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students is found at www.vidorisd.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 discipline person.

Index

Administration	6
Alcohol and drug testing	9
Annuslized compensation	14
Arrests and convictions	36
Asbestos management plan	38
Associations	35
Bad weather closing	38
Benefits	
cafeteria plan	17
Board	
of trustees	6
Building use	40
Certification	
first aid and CPR	10
Child abuse reporting	33
Code of ethics	30
Communication	29
Compensation	13
Computer use	37
Conflict of interest	34
Contract	
employment	8
noncertified	9
Copyrighted materials	37
Court appearances	28
Court-ordered withholding	42
Criminal history checks	36
Disability	
certified employees	26
Disability Leave	
Temporary	26
Dismissal	
contract employees	40
noncontract employees	41
Drug-abuse prevention	33
Emergencies	39
Employee	28
involvement	13
recognition	28
Employment	
after retirement	8
Equal employment opportunity	8
Exit interviews	41

Family and medical leave	23
benefits and protections	24
definition.....	24
eligibility requirements.....	24
entitlement	23
local provision	25
Fraud	34
Gifts and favors	35
Grievances.....	29
Harassment.....	32
student.....	32
Helpful contacts	7
Insurance	
health, dental and life.....	17
supplemental.....	17
unemployment	18
workers' compensation	18
Job vacancy announcements	8
Leave	
assault	27
court appearances	22
discretionary	19
End of semester	22
extended sick	20
failure to return	22
family and medical	21
Fitness for duty certification.....	21
Intermittent or Reduce Schedule	21
jury.....	27
local	20
medical certification	21
military.....	28
nondiscretionary	19
personal.....	19
Sick	20
sick leave pool	21
temporary disability.....	22
workers' compensation	22
Leaves and absences	19
Military leave	23
Name and address changes	39
Outside employment	12
Overtime	
compensation.....	16
Parent notification.....	12
Paychecks.....	15

Payroll	15
schedule	<i>See</i> Paychecks
Performance evaluation	12
Personnel records	39
Pest control treatment	38
Possession of weapons	37
Purchasing procedures	39
Reassignments	11
Reports to SBEC	41
Resignations	40
contract employees	40
noncontract employees	40
Retirement	
leave reimbursement	22
Safety	35
Salaries	13
School	
director	7
Staff development	13
Standards of Conduct	29
Student	42
attendance	44
bullying	44
complaints	43
discipline	44
hazing	44
medication	43
records	42
Teacher Retirement	18
Tobacco use	36
Transfers	11
Travel expense reimbursement	16
Visitors	37
Workers' compensation	
benefits	27
insurance	18
paid leave offset	22
Workload	11