

# LORENZO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## 2025–2026 Employee Handbook



If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of a disability, please email Dr. Gregory Nelson at [gr.nelson@lorenzoisd.net](mailto:gr.nelson@lorenzoisd.net). Pending presentation to the Board on August 18, 2025.  
Current as of August 7, 2025

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## Employee Handbook Receipt

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Campus/Department \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Lorenzo 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.

The employee handbook can be found electronically at:

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 it according to the instructions provided.
- ☐ I choose to receive a hard copy of the employee handbook and understand I am required to contact the superintendent's secretary to obtain a hard copy.

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign and date this receipt and then forward it to the administration office.

-

## Introduction

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

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

<https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline?key=353>

## District Information

### Description of the District

Lorenzo Independent School District is a small, close-knit public school district located in Lorenzo, Texas, serving students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Our district is committed to providing a high-quality education in a safe, supportive, and student-centered environment. We value the unique strengths of our students and work diligently to prepare them for success in college, career, and life.

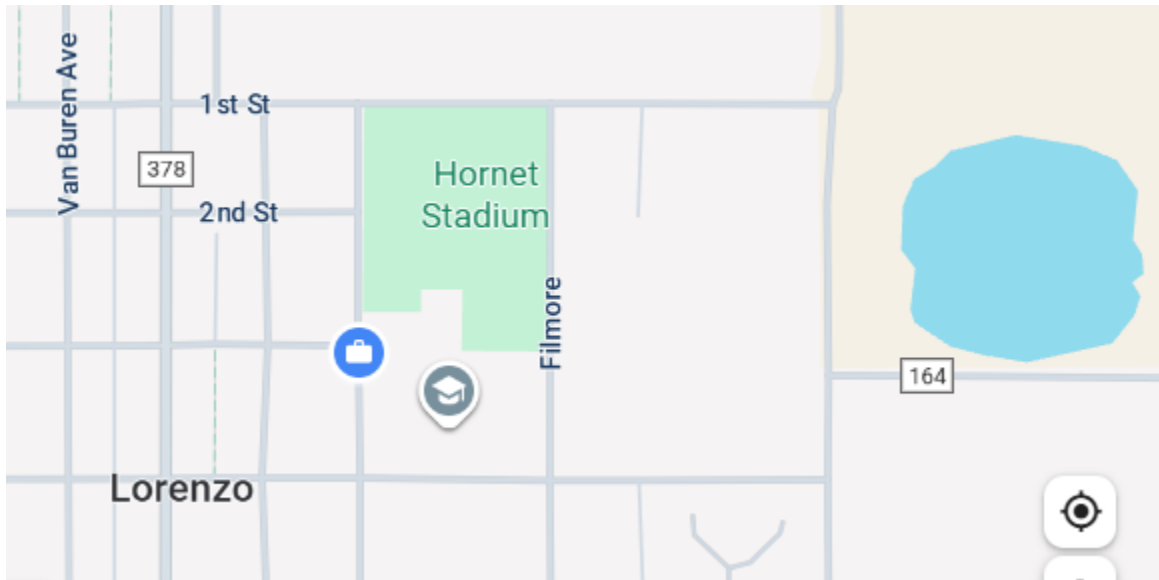
Lorenzo ISD is guided by a shared vision to inspire excellence, nurture character, and empower every learner to reach their full potential. We believe that every student can achieve at high levels when provided with engaging instruction, caring relationships, and a culture of high expectations. Our instructional practices emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and real-world application, ensuring students are prepared for the challenges of an ever-changing world.

We are actively building innovative programs and learning opportunities that address the needs of the whole child. This includes the implementation of AVID strategies across all grade levels to strengthen college and career readiness, the creation of The NEST (Nurturing Excellence, Self-awareness, and Tenacity) to provide academic and behavioral support in a positive, non-punitive setting, and the development of restorative practices to build stronger relationships and foster a respectful learning community.

Our dedicated staff works together as a team, building a culture of collaboration, accountability, and professional growth. We recognize that our success as a district depends on the strength of our people, and we are committed to supporting and equipping our employees with the resources, training, and encouragement they need to make a lasting difference in the lives of students.

Lorenzo ISD is more than a school district. Lorenzo ISD is a place where students are known by name, supported as individuals, and challenged to become thoughtful, capable, and responsible citizens. Every day, we are building a brighter future for our students, our community, and generations to come.

## District Map



## Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

Our mission is to create a supportive, equitable, and innovative environment where every student is equipped to overcome challenges, discover their strengths, and achieve their highest potential with support from their families, their educators, and the community.

## Board of Trustees

Current board members include:

Mr. Brandon Aycock, President  
Mr. Tony Mendoza, Vice President  
Mrs. Debbie Kirksey, Secretary  
Mr. Larry Birdwell, Trustee  
Mrs. Terry DeLeon-Garcia, Trustee  
Mr. Erasmo Garcia, Trustee  
Mrs. Rebeca Mendoza, Trustee

## Board Meeting Schedule

Lorenzo Board of Trustee Meeting Dates for the 2025 – 2026 School Year:

Monday, August 18, 2025, Regular Meeting 7:00 pm  
Monday, September 22, 2025, Regular Meeting 7:00 pm  
Monday, October 20, 2025, Regular Meeting 7:00 pm  
Thursday, November 20, 2025, Regular Meeting 7:00 pm  
Thursday, December 18, 2025, Regular Meeting 7:00 pm  
Thursday, January 22, 2026, Regular Meeting 7:00 pm  
Thursday, February 19, 2026, Regular Meeting 7:00 pm



Monday, March 23, 2026, Regular Meeting 7:00 pm  
Monday, April 20, 2026, Regular Meeting 7:00 pm  
Monday, May 18, 2026, Regular Meeting 7:00 pm  
Monday, June 15, 2026, Budget Workshop at 6:00 pm; Regular meeting at 7:00 pm  
Monday, July 20, 2026, 7:00 pm

### **Administration**

Dr. Gregory Nelson, Superintendent  
Jessica Crabb, Assistant Superintendent, CFO  
Mandy Haire, Director of Teaching and Learning  
Kelcey Wormsbaker, Director of Student Success  
Kris Lamm, Director of East Plains Educational COOP (EPEC)  
Amber Langehennig, Assistant Director of EPEC  
Danny Thomas, Director of Technology  
Brian Sepkowitz, Director of Athletics  
Omar Villegas, Operations Director  
Angela Moreno, District Counselor  
Laura West, District Nurse  
Kathy Jackson, Superintendent's Secretary and PEIMS Coordinator  
Esmer Alcala, Coordinator of Payroll/HR/EPEC

*Board Approved March 27, 2025 - Updated August 1, 2025*

OUR FUTURE is HERE!

Empowering Today. Shaping Tomorrow

# Lorenzo ISD Employee Handbook

## Helpful Contacts

### 2025-2026 LORENZO ISD PHONE EXTENSIONS

Central Office	Secondary	Elementary	EPEC
(806) 634-5591	(806) 634-5592	(806) 634-5593	(806) 634-5518
Fax: <a href="mailto:lisdFax@lorenzoisd.net">lisdFax@lorenzoisd.net</a> ** Must be used in place of fax number**			
101 Board Room	<b>Office:</b>	<b>Office:</b>	<b>Office:</b>
257 Crabb, Jessica	226 Rosas, Diana - Secretary	231 Rodriguez, Tammy - Secretary	235 Alcala, Esmer (& HR/PR)
221 Jackson, Kathy	<b>Teachers:</b>	<b>Teachers:</b>	320 Carr, Sandy
222 Nelson, Dr. Gregory	324 Buckelew, Blake (NEST - ISS)	312 Allmon, Sharon	261 Cook, Angela (PT)
264 Wormsbaker, Kelcey	TBA Buckelew, Blake (DAEP)	267 Cheeks, Glenda	240 Cortez, Heather
232 Haire, Mandy	239 Calvillo, Derrick	266 Elementary Inclusion	TBA Daugherty, Rachel (LSSP)
<b>Ag Dept</b>	263 Chen, Gina (ITV LAB)	319 Elem Science Lab	260 EPEC Diagnosticians
229 Hiracheta, Kris	224 Computer Lab	268 Elem Specials	236 EPEC Workroom
	303 Hiracheta, Lindsey	280 Elem Teachers Lounge	237 Hall, Terry
<b>Culinary</b>	263 ITV, Dual Credit	323 Elem Workroom	234 Lamm, Kris (Director)
305 Parum, Shannon	265 Knowles, Jake	223 Farmer, Mary	322 Langehennig, Amber(Asst. Dir)
	246 Libby, Marianne	248 Oursbourne, Jana	304 McKinney, Amy (PK/EE)
<b>Cafeteria</b>	250 Martinez, Adriana	321 Garcia, Marlana	261 Spurgeon, Melinda
243 LISD Cafeteria	253 Molina, Mary (Karr, Ricky-Sub)	309 Math/Reading Lab	TBA Wade, Lacey (Sp. Path)
<b>Maintenance</b>	254 Norman, Kelly	304 McKinney, Amy [PK/EE]	<b>ELEM GUIDANCE INSTRUCTOR</b>
244 Villegas, Omar	302 O'Neal, Julie	308 Teacher's Aides Elem Upstairs	242
<b>Library</b>	247 Salinas, Gladys (Classroom)	258 Wallace, Raye Gail	<b>Counselor</b>
251 Rodriguez, Tammy [Part-t	318 Secondary Teacher's Lounge	306 Zermeno, Viviana	227 Moreno, Angela
<b>IT Dept</b>	310 Sepkowitz, Brian (Classroom)	258 Wallace, Raye Gail	
245 Thomas, Danny	TBA Sims, Preston	306 Zermeno, Viviana	
<b>NEST</b>	TBA Trevino, Dillion		
324	<b>Athletics</b>		
<b>ISS/DAEP</b>	228 Boys Coaches Office		
TBA	230 Girls Coaches Office		
<b>Nurse</b>	Brian Sepkowitz, AD/Head FB/Track		
252 West, Laura (RN)	Gladys Salinas (Girls Coordinator)		
<b>Safety and Security</b>			
255 Ortiz, Adam			
Physical Address: 1003 3rd (3rd & Polk), Lorenzo TX 79343			
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 520 Lorenzo TX 79343			
REV: 08/06/2025			



## Who to Call

### Lorenzo Independent School District

#### Who to Contact for Support in Lorenzo ISD – Phone: 806-634-5591

**School Counselor, Mrs. Angela Moreno,** [amoreno@lorenzoisd.net](mailto:amoreno@lorenzoisd.net)

Contact for support with your child's emotional well-being, social concerns, friendship challenges, bullying concerns, conflict resolution, academic planning, or connecting your family to helpful resources.

**Director of Teaching and Learning, Mrs. Amanda Haire,** [am.haire@lorenzoisd.net](mailto:am.haire@lorenzoisd.net)

Contact for questions about curriculum, instructional quality, academic programs, lesson alignment, assessments, learning standards, or the overall design and delivery of classroom instruction.

**Director of Student Success, Mr. Kelcey Wormsbaker,** [ke.wormsbaker@lorenzoisd.net](mailto:ke.wormsbaker@lorenzoisd.net)

Contact for concerns about student behavior, passing or failing a class, conflicts between students, conflicts between a student and a teacher, school culture, student engagement, or support for a safe and inclusive environment.

**Operations/Maintenance / Custodial / Transportation Director, Mr. Omar Villegas,** [ovillegas@lorenzoisd.net](mailto:ovillegas@lorenzoisd.net)

Contact for issues related to bus routes or schedules, bus safety, building maintenance or repairs, custodial services, or facility cleanliness and safety.

**Technology Director, Mr. Danny Thomas,** [dthomas@lorenzoisd.net](mailto:dthomas@lorenzoisd.net)

Contact for district technology issues such as Chromebook/iPad repairs, student technology access, online learning tools, or school-issued account login problems.

**Special Education Director, Mr. Kriss Lamm,** [kr.lamm@lorenzoisd.net](mailto:kr.lamm@lorenzoisd.net)

Contact for questions about special education eligibility, services, accommodations, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), or support for students with disabilities.

**District Nurse, Laura West,** [la.west@lorenzoisd.net](mailto:la.west@lorenzoisd.net)

Contact for health-related concerns, medication administration, immunization requirements, student medical conditions, or illness and injury questions.

**Director of Safety and Security, Mr. Adam Ortiz,** [ad.ortiz@lorenzoisd.net](mailto:ad.ortiz@lorenzoisd.net)

Contact for concerns about school safety, visitor procedures, emergency drills, security systems, or safety-related incidents.

**Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Jessica Crabb,** [jcrabb@lorenzoisd.net](mailto:jcrabb@lorenzoisd.net)

Contact for district-level concerns not resolved at the campus or department level, or for guidance on policy interpretation and program coordination before contacting the Superintendent.

**Superintendent, Dr. Gregory Nelson,** [gr.nelson@lorenzoisd.net](mailto:gr.nelson@lorenzoisd.net)

Contact for district-wide concerns, major unresolved issues, governance or policy questions, or matters requiring leadership oversight after all other contacts have been attempted.

## **Employment**

### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

Policies DAA, DIA

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

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

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the Title IX coordinator for employees to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment: Dr. Gregory Nelson, Superintendent, gr.nelson@lorenzoisd.net. Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during nonbusiness hours, by mail, email, or phone. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator for employees for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: Dr. Gregory Nelson, Superintendent, gr.nelson@lorenzoisd.net.

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

### **Job Vacancy Announcements**

Policy DC

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the district's website and on the Region 17 Job Board, located at: <https://jobboardhq.esc17.net/search>

### **Employment after Retirement**

Policy DC

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

## **Contract and Noncontract Employment**

### **Policy DC series**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Certification and Licenses**

### **Policies DBA, DF**

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

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

## **Recertification of Employment Authorization**

### **Policy DC**

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

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

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

### **Policy CQ, DHE**

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. Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The district may search the employee, the employee's personal items, and work areas including district-owned technology resources, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work sites or used in district business. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may result if an employee refuses to submit to testing or is found to violate district policy.

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

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug testing policies and related educational material should contact central 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), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to the athletic director by the last day of the first 6 weeks.

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

## **Reassignments and Transfers**

Policy DK

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

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

## **Workload and Work Schedules**

Policies DEAB, DK, DL

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

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



Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees. Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. See Overtime Compensation on page 21 for additional information.

## **ADA Accommodations**

The district will provide reasonable accommodations to employees with a disability if the accommodation would allow the individual to perform the essential functions of their job, unless doing so would create an undue hardship. An employee or their supervisor may initiate a request for accommodation by contacting Mrs. Esmer Alcala at 806-634-5591 and identifying an adjustment or change at work that is needed because of a disability. An employee may also submit a written request to HR using the ADA Accommodation Request Form, which is available from Mrs. Esmer Alcala.

Upon receiving the reasonable accommodation request, HR or the ADA coordinator will meet with the employee and conduct an informal, interactive discussion to identify an accommodation that will allow the employee to perform the essential functions of the job effectively. The district may request medical information concerning the employee's disability and to assist in determining what accommodation(s) may be available and appropriate. The employee will be responsible for obtaining the information from their health care provider. Medical information received will be confidential and kept separate from the employee's personnel file.

After meeting with the employee and reviewing medical documentation, HR or the ADA coordinator will determine whether the employee is a qualified individual with a disability and develop a reasonable accommodation plan for the employee. Accommodation will be determined on a case-by-case basis. HR or the ADA coordinator will work closely with the employee and supervisor to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided and effective.

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

Policies DEAB, DG

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

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

The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections of Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP Act) requires an employee to notify the district if they believe the district is out of compliance in providing breaks for a nursing mother. The employee must give the district 10 days to come into compliance before making any claim of liability against the district. An employee with concerns should contact Jessica Crabb, Assistant Superintendent.

## **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act**

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) provides consideration of accommodations to employees who have known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. An employee seeking a PWFA accommodation should contact Jessica Crabb, Assistant Superintendent, to begin the interactive process.

## **Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications**

Policies DK, DBA

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

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

## **Outside Employment and Tutoring**

Policy DBD

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

## **Performance Evaluation**

Policy DN series

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

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

## **Employee Involvement**

Policies BQA, BQB

At both the campus and district levels, Lorenzo 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 noninstructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g., bus drivers) and continued employee skill development.

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

## **Mental Health**

All district employees who regularly interact with students are required to complete an evidenced-based mental health training program that is designed to provide instruction regarding the recognition and support of children and youth who experience mental health or substance use issues that may pose a threat to school safety. Employees must provide a certificate of completion to the district that includes the name of the training course, along with supporting documentation confirming that the training meets the requirements of the commissioner rules for mental health training.

Campus staff required to complete the training includes, but is not limited to, teachers, coaches, librarians, instructional coaches, administrators, administrative support personnel, school resource officers, paraprofessionals, substitutes, custodians, cafeteria staff, bus drivers, crossing guards, and district special program liaisons, and supervisors of personnel who regularly interact with students.

## **Employee Work Calendar and Work Hours**

All instructional and professional staff are expected to be present on campus and ready to begin their workday by 7:30 a.m. and remain on duty until 4:00 p.m., unless otherwise directed by their supervisor or principal. These hours are in place to ensure adequate preparation, supervision, and collaboration necessary for student and campus success. Non-instructional staff hours are set by the supervisor.

Staff members are expected to support the smooth operation of the school day, including but not limited to student arrival and dismissal, morning duties, parent communication, team meetings, and planning activities before and after the student instructional day.

## Student Hours:

### Elementary Campus

Elementary student instructional day is from 8:00 a.m. to 3:40 p.m.

Staff should be available to support student supervision prior to the start and following the end of the instructional day.

### Secondary Campus

Student instructional day is from 7:45 a.m. to 3:50 p.m.

Staff should ensure punctual supervision, class transitions, and appropriate coverage during both the early start and late release.

### Extra Duty Assignments

Staff members who receive extra duty stipends for responsibilities outside the standard workday, including supervision, coaching, tutoring, event coordination, or club sponsorship, are expected to fulfill those duties as outlined in their stipend agreements.

### Monthly Staff Meetings

The Leadership Team will schedule monthly staff meetings and will communicate the date and time in advance.

Attendance is required unless excused by administration. These meetings are designed to provide timely updates, training, campus planning, and opportunities for collaboration aligned with district and campus goals. Hourly staff members will be compensated when attending these after-hour staff meetings.

## Employee Standards for Professional Dress

### Employee Professional Dress Standards

Lorenzo ISD staff are expected to maintain a professional appearance that reflects pride in the profession, supports a positive learning environment, and sets a standard that encourages student respect and success. Staff attire communicates expectations to students, parents, and the community and plays an important role in promoting a culture of professionalism throughout the district.

Employee dress should be clean, appropriate to the educational setting, and consistent with the standards applied to students, as outlined in the district's Student Dress and Grooming Policy. Staff members are expected to model compliance with all student dress code expectations, with the exception of student-specific earring restrictions.

In addition to regular professional dress expectations, the following campus-wide exceptions apply:

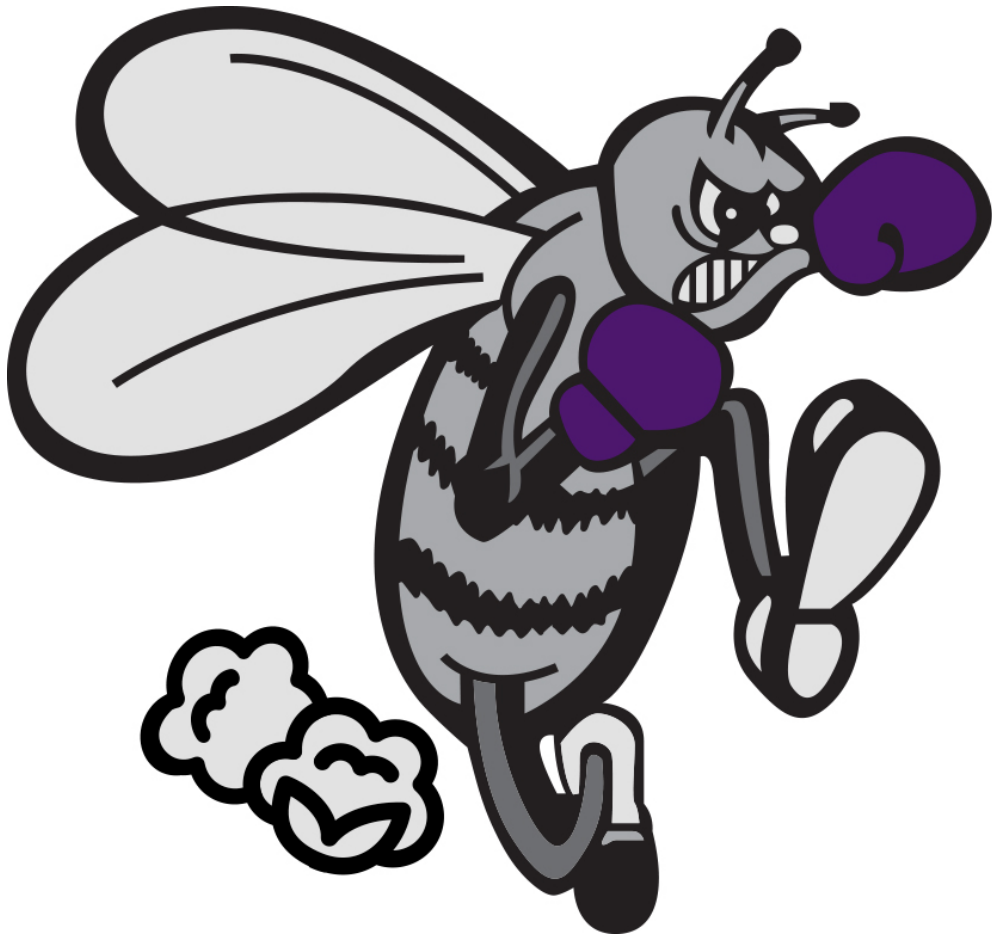
- Wednesdays: Staff may wear jeans only if paired with a college, career, or military-themed shirt that supports post-secondary awareness.
- Fridays: Staff may wear jeans with or without a Lorenzo ISD spirit shirt, college shirt, or career-themed shirt.

All jeans must be clean, free of holes or frays, and worn appropriately at the waist.

As with student expectations, professional judgment should guide clothing choices to ensure modesty, functionality, and alignment with the educational purpose of the school setting.

Administration retains the discretion to determine the appropriateness of staff attire and will address concerns on a case-by-case basis.

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# Compensation and Benefits

## Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district’s pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See Overtime Compensation, page 21.)

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 Esmer Alcala for more information about the district’s pay schedules or their own pay.

## Paychecks

All professional and salaried employees are paid monthly. Hourly employees are paid semi-monthly. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee’s written authorization. Employees are responsible for regularly reviewing the accuracy of their pay statement.

The schedule of pay dates for the 2024–2025 school year follows:

<u>Pay Date</u>	<u>Pay Period</u>
07/25/2025	July
08/25/2025	August
09/25/2026	September
10/24/2025	October
11/25/2025	November
12/19/2025	December
01/23/2026	January
02/25/2026	February
03/25/2026	March
04/24/2025	April
05/23/2026	May
06/25/2026	June

## **Automatic Payroll Deposit**

### **Policy CFEA**

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

- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) or Social Security employee contributions
- Federal income tax required for all full-time employees
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986)
- Child support and spousal maintenance, if applicable
- Delinquent federal education loan payments, if applicable
- Employee's share of insurance premiums
- Annuities, higher education savings plans or prepaid tuition programs
- Professional organization dues if requested

Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Overpayments. Employees are not entitled to any funds the district overpays. An overpayment occurs if an employee is paid more than the amount the employee should have been paid under the assigned pay grade and applicable supplemental pay.

If an overpayment is reported in the current fiscal year, a payment plan will be developed to recoup the payment. Generally, an overpayment will be paid in one pay cycle. However, if this creates an undue hardship for the employee, the district has the discretion to develop a plan for regular payroll deductions in the same fiscal year.

An agreement between an employee and the district must be in place in order to deduct any overpayment.

## **Payroll Deduction**

Please contact Mrs. Esmer Alcala for all payroll deduction questions and concerns.

## **Overtime Compensation**

### **Policies DEAB, DEC**

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

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 7:00 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m.

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. 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. (DEAB local)

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

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

## **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

Policy DEE

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor and the 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 allowable expenses other than mileage.

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

Policy CRD

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

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

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

## **Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact Esmer Alcala for more information.

## **Insurance**

Please contact Mrs. Esmer Alcala for all insurance questions and concerns.



## **Cafeteria Plan Benefits**

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis (i.e., disability, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer and dread disease, dental, and additional term life insurance). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.

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

## **Workers Compensation Insurance**

Policy CRE

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from TASB, effective July 1, 2025.

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 Jessica Crabb. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. See Workers' Compensation Benefits, page 23 for information on use of paid leave for such absences.

## **Unemployment Compensation Insurance**

Policy CRF

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

## **Teacher Retirement**

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify Dr. Gregory Nelson or Esmer Alcala as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available

on the web ([www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov)). See page 23 for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

## **Other Benefit Programs**

## **Leaves and Absences**

Policies DEC, DECA, DECB

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

Paid leave must be used in 1 day increments. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state and local leave. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order: local then state.

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

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

## **Immediate Family**

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

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

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

## **Medical Certification**

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

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

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

### **Continuation of Health Insurance.**

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

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

### **Personal Leave**

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

#### **Nondiscretionary**

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

#### **Discretionary**

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

### **Leave Proration**

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

### **State Sick Leave**

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

**Attendance and Absences:** Punctual and consistent attendance at work is a fundamental requirement of your employment at Lorenzo ISD. Excessive absences or repeated tardiness in reporting for duty can result in the termination of your employment. "Excessive" absences are any that are not in compliance with our policies and procedures for taking available local, state, or federal leave. If you are going to be absent or late for work, you must first contact your immediate supervisor and their assigned secretary by 6:00 a.m. This contact must be made every time you are absent, or late unless you have provided the Superintendent or other appropriate central office personnel with more specific long-term information from your treating health care provider. You must sign an absence from duty form immediately upon return to work.

**Less than Two Hours Absent from Duty Policy:** If an employee needs to be absent from duty less than two hour in 1 day, the employee will need to complete an absent from duty form which will need to be turned in to the campus supervisor. The employee will need to work out coverage with colleagues or the principal. All employees using this option will need to use these either the first two hours of a day or the last two horse of a school day (starting when the employee's work day begins and/or when it ends.) Employees will be allowed four less than two hours absent from duty usages per academic year. After the 4th one used, the employee will be charged a full personal day.

We do not have a category of leave called "leave without pay." If you are absent in excess of the number of days of paid leave you have available under district policy, you are simply absent and will not be paid for those days. Employees who are paid on a salary basis will have appropriate deductions made from the regular salary payment for absences in excess of accumulated leave. If you do not comply with our policies and procedure for notice of an absence or for requesting leave, you will not be paid for those days of absence even if you have leave available.

**Basic Leave Information:** The complete text of the policy on leaves and absences [DEC (LEGAL) and (LOCAL); DECA (LEGAL); DECB (LEGAL)] is available at Lorenzo Policy Online but we are providing a brief summary of the most commonly used kinds of leaves in this Handbook. All full-time employees receive 5 days of state personal leave each year. Part-time employees or those who work less than a full year receive a pro-rated number of days. Additionally, the district provides 5 days of local leave each year for professional employees and 5 days of local leave each year for paraprofessionals. Refer to DEC (LOCAL) for specifics on using each kind of leave. You can always use accumulated state or local leave for your personal illness or injury or the illness or injury of an immediate family member. Days taken as “personal leave” must be requested 3 days in advance. You cannot use personal leave during the first and last weeks of a semester, immediately before or after a holiday, or during state or local testing periods. We will try always to honor timely requests for personal leave that comply with policy requirements, but your principal or supervisor may withdraw approval if unforeseeable absences among other staff (bad weather, flu or other transmittable disease) would affect the efficient and effective operation of the campus or department. Perfect Attendance- any employee that has missed NO time at all is eligible for a perfect attendance reward each six weeks and each semester.

**Leave request process:** All requests for days off - personal, jury duty, workshops or other, that are made ahead of time will be turned in to the assigned secretary of your immediate supervisor for the appropriate approval as needed. You will find the appropriate forms in that office.

## **Extended Leave**

**Extended Sick Leave: Policy DEC (Local)** After all available state and local leave days have been exhausted, an employee shall be granted in a school year a maximum of 20 leave days of extended sick leave to be used ONLY for the employee’s own personal illness or injury, including pregnancy-related illness or injury. A written request for extended sick leave must be accompanied by medical certification of the illness or injury. For all employees, 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.

## **Vacation**

### **Policy DED**

Eligible employees in positions normally requiring 12 months of service annually shall receive paid vacation days in accordance with administrative regulations that address the following:

1. Eligibility criteria;
2. Accrual rates and availability;
3. Request and approval processes;
4. Accumulation and carryover limits;
5. Treatment of vacation days upon separation from service. Eligible employees in positions normally requiring 12 months of service annually shall receive paid holidays in accordance with the employee’s duty schedule and administrative regulations

## **Sick Leave Bank (or Pool)**

**Sick Leave Bank (or Pool) Sick Leave Pool/Bank: Policy DEC (Local), DGBA (Local)** 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 all employees, an amount equal to one-third (?) the individual employee's daily rate of pay shall be deducted for each sick leave pool day taken.

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.

**Establishment:** A request for the establishment of a sick leave pool shall be made in writing to the Superintendent. Pooling may be requested when an employee has exhausted his or her state and local sick and personal leave. When such a request is made, the Superintendent or designee shall notify all district employees in a timely manner.

Employees wishing to contribute to the pool shall sign the notice and return it to the central office. Each employee's donation shall be limited to four days per year. If more days are donated than are needed, a lottery system shall be used to determine which employees' days shall be used. A maximum of 10 days may be contributed to a sick leave pool. If the employee in need is still unable to return to work, another request for a sick leave pool may be initiated.

**Cessation of Pool:** The sick leave pool ceases to exist when:

1. The employee returns to work full time.
2. The employee reaches the maximum number of days allowed under this policy.
3. All days contributed have been used.
4. The school year ends.
5. The employee resigns or is no longer employed.

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

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

What is FMLA leave?

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

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

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

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

You have the right to use FMLA leave in one block of time. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, you may take FMLA leave intermittently in separate blocks of time, or on a reduced schedule by working less hours each day or week. Read Fact Sheet #28M(c) for more information.

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

Am I eligible to take FMLA leave?

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

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

Airline flight crew employees have different "hours of service" requirements.

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

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

How do I request FMLA leave?

Generally, to request FMLA leave you must:

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

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

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

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

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

What does my employer need to do?

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

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

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

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

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

Where can I find more information?

Call 1-866-487-9243 or visit [dol.gov/fmla](http://dol.gov/fmla) to learn more.

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

### **Local Procedures for Implementing Family and Medical Leave Provisions**

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period beginning on the first duty day of the school year

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

## **Temporary Disability Leave**

### **Certified Employees**

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

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

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

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

### **Workers' Compensation Benefits**

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

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

compensation wage benefits for any absence resulting from a work-related illness or injury, which may not equal his or her pre-illness or -injury wage.

### **Assault Leave**

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

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 as not responsible for purposes of criminal liability.

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

### **Bereavement Leave**

Please contact Mrs. Esmer Alcala for all leave related questions and concerns.

### **Jury Duty**

Policies DEC, DG

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

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

### **Compliance with a Subpoena**

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

## **Truancy Court Appearances**

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

## **Religious Observance**

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

## **Military Leave**

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

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

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

## **Mental Health Leave for Peace Officers and Licensed Telecommunicators**

Districts employing peace officers and licensed telecommunicators are required to provide these employees with paid mental health leave. Include a description of the leave benefits based on Policy DEC(LOCAL), local leave regulations, and applicable procedures.

## **Quarantine Leave for Peace Officers**

Peace officers employed by a school district are entitled to paid leave if ordered to isolate or quarantine because of a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) no longer recommends an isolation period of five days for individuals with COVID 19. At the district level, isolation practices are most likely no longer needed. Entities should update local procedures to align with Policy DBB(LOCAL) and eliminate isolation requirements.

If quarantine leave is applicable to your district, written procedures should be communicated in this topic. Clearly state who is authorized to order an officer to quarantine or isolate, such as the supervisor (e.g., chief of police or superintendent) or local health authority (e.g., county health department). Note the definition of a health authority doesn't include all physicians, only those who have been appointed under Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 121.

Firefighters and emergency medical technicians also are entitled to this leave. An instructor or other employee may also qualify under this policy if they are certified as an emergency medical technician under the Texas Health and Safety Code. Include these positions, if applicable to your district.

### **Leave for Peace Officers for Illness or Injury**

A full-time district-employed licensed police officer who regularly serves in a law enforcement capacity in a district police department is entitled to a paid leave of absence (LOA) for an illness or injury related to the person's line of duty. If necessary, the leave shall continue for at least one year.

After all available paid leave days and any applicable compensatory time have been exhausted, an employee shall be granted in a school year a maximum of 20 leave days of extended sick leave to be used only for the employee's own personal illness or injury, including pregnancy-related illness or injury.

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

For all employees, the District shall deduct an amount equal to one-third the individual employee's daily rate of pay for each day of extended sick leave taken.

If unable to return to work at the end of the paid leave and any extension, a police officer may use accumulated sick, vacation, and other accrued leave before being placed on unpaid temporary leave. At the end of temporary leave, the police officer will be reinstated at the same rank and with the same seniority the person had before going on temporary leave.

### **Payment for Accumulated Leave Upon Separation**

Lorenzo ISD does not provide payment for accumulated leave upon separation.

## **Employee Relations and Communications**

### **Employee Recognition and Appreciation**

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

### **District Communications**

Throughout the school year, district and campus administrators publish newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

## **Complaints and Grievances**

### **Policy DGBA**

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

The formal process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, employees can bring concerns or complaints to the board of trustees.

### **Complaints: DGBA(LOCAL)**

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

### **Other Complaint Processes:**

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

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

### **Notice to Employees:**

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

#### Guiding Principles, Informal Process:

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

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

#### Direct Communication with Board Members

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

#### Formal Process:

An employee may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

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

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

#### Freedom from Retaliation:

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

#### Whistleblower Complaints:

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

#### Complaints Against Supervisors:

Complaints alleging a violation of law by a supervisor may be made to the Superintendent or designee. Complaint forms alleging a violation of law by the Superintendent may be submitted directly to the Board or designee.

#### General Provisions, Filing:

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

#### Scheduling Conferences:

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

#### Response:

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

postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

**Days:**

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

**Representative:**

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

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

**Consolidating Complaints:**

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

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

**Untimely Filings:**

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

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

**Costs Incurred:**

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

**Complaint and Appeal Forms:**

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

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

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

**Audio Recording:**

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

**Level One:**

Complaint forms must be filed:

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Level Two:

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

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

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

The Level One record shall include:

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

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

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

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

#### Level Three:

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

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written



Level Two response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level Two response deadline.

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

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

The Level Two record shall include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

See Lorenzo ISD Policy Online (<https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline?key=353>) for all policies referenced in this handbook.

## **Employee Conduct and Welfare**

### **Standard of Conduct**

#### **Policy DH**

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

- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.

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

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines, including intentionally making a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the superintendent knew of the incident. See Reports to the Texas Education Agency, page 63 for additional information.

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

### **Purpose and Scope**

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The

Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification. (19 TAC 247.1(b))

## **Enforceable Standards**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**

Policies DH, DIA

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

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

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

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation can be accessed at [Lorenzo ISD Policy Online](#).

## **Harassment of Students**

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

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

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

All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect occurred must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. See [Reporting Suspected Child Abuse](#), page 44 and [Bullying](#), page 67 for additional information.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students is located at [Lorenzo ISD Policy Online](#).

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

Policies DG, FFG, GRA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect following the procedures described above in Reporting Suspected Child Abuse.

### **Reports to Texas Education Agency**

The conduct of an employee must be reported to TEA if there is evidence that the employee was involved in any of the following:

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

- Engaged in inappropriate communication with a student or minor
- Failed to maintain appropriate boundaries with a student or minor

For a certified employee the conduct below must also be reported:

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

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

## **Crime**

Policy DG

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

## **Scope and Sequence**

Policy DG

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

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

## **Technology Resources**

Policy CQ

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

- Imposes no tangible cost to the district.
- Does not unduly burden the district's technology resources.

- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance.

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

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

## **Personal Use of Electronic Communications**

Policy CQ, DH

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- o The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students using any form of electronic communications, including mobile and web applications, that are not provided or accessible by the district unless a specific exception is noted below.
  - o Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility.
- An employee who communicates with a student using text messaging shall comply with the following protocol:

- The employee shall include at least one of the student's parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message;
- For each text message addressed to one or more students, the employee shall send a copy of the text message to the employee's district email address.

- o The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- o The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page (“professional page”) for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee’s professional page.
- o The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 5:30 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- o The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- o The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators’ Code of Ethics including:
  - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
  - Copyright law [Policy CY]
  - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DH]
- o Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with one or more currently-enrolled students.
- o Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through email, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.
- o An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.
- o All staff are required to use school email accounts for all electronic communications with parents. Communication about school issues through personal email accounts or text messages are not allowed as they cannot be preserved in accordance with the district’s record retention policy.
- o An employee shall notify his or supervisor in writing within one business day if a student engages in an improper electronic communication with the employee. The employee should describe the form and content of the electronic communication.

## **Public Information on Private Devices**

Policy DH, GB

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

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

## **Criminal History Background Checks**

Policy DBAA

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

## Employee Arrests and Convictions

Policy DH, DHB, DHC

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

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

Moral turpitude includes the following:

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

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

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

**Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:**

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

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

Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:

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

## **Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention**

Policy DH

Lorenzo 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:

### **Alcohol and Drugs / Notice of Drug-Free Workplace**

As a condition of employment, an employee shall abide by the terms of the following drug-free workplace provisions. An employee shall notify the Superintendent in writing if the employee is convicted for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace in accordance with Arrests, Indictments, Convictions, and Other Adjudications, below.

An employee shall not manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances during working hours while on District property or at school-related activities during or outside of usual working hours:

Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.

Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.

Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation.

Any other intoxicant or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drug.

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

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

Policies DH, FNCD, GKA

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

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

## **Fraud and Financial Impropriety**

### **Policy CAA**

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

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

## **Conflict of Interest**

### **Policy CB, DBD**

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

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

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

## **Gifts and Favors**

### **Policy DBD**

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

## **Copyrighted Materials**

### **Policy CY**

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

## **Associations and Political Activities**

### **Policy DGA**

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

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

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

## **Charitable Contributions**

### **Policy DG**

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

## **Safety and Security**

### **Policy CK series**

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety and security of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety and security program includes written guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. See Emergencies on page 59 for additional information.

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

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

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact any administrator.

### **Possession of Firearms and Weapons**

Policies DH, FNCG, GKA

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

### **Visitors in the Workplace**

Policy GKC

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

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

Policy CSC

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

### **Pest Control Treatment**

Policies CLB, DI

Employees are prohibited from applying any pesticide or herbicide without appropriate training and prior approval 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 near entry doors. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests individualized notice will be notified by telephone, written, or electric means. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

## **Other Topics**



## **General Procedures**

### **Emergency School Closing**

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

### **Emergencies**

Policies CKC, CKD

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

### **Purchasing Procedures**

Policy CH

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the business office 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 your campus supervisor or Jessica Crabb for additional information on purchasing procedures.

### **Name and Address Change**

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

### **Personnel Records**

Policy DBA, GBA

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

Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

Lorenzo ISD Employee Handbook

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

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

## **Facility Use**

Policies DGA, GKD

Employees who wish to use district facilities during or after school hours must follow established procedures. Mr. Kelcey Wormsbaker is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact Mr. Wormsbaker to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged. Employees should not allow anyone access to the building at any time without advanced written approval from Mr. Wormsbaker, Ms. Crabb, or Dr. Nelson. This includes the the employees' children or family.

## **Termination of Employment**

### **Resignations**

Policy DFE, DHB

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

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

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's resignation within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in Reports to Texas Education Agency on page 63. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and there is evidence to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

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

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

within seven business days of receiving a report from a principal, or of knowing about an employee's resignation or termination following an alleged incident of misconduct described above.

### **Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employee**

Policies DF Series, DHB

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be nonrenewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The timelines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee.

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's termination within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in Reports to Texas Education Agency on page 63. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee is terminated and there is evidence to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

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

### **Dismissal of Noncontract Employees**

Policies DCD, DP

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See Complaints and Grievances, page 37.)

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

### **Discharge of Convicted Employees**

Policy DF

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

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

### **Exit Interviews and Procedures**

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

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

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

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

## **Student Issues**

### **Equal Educational Opportunities**

Policies FB, FFH

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination against students based on sex, including sexual harassment should be directed to Dr. Gregory Nelson, the district Title IX coordinator for students. Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to Dr. Gregory Nelson the district ADA/Section 504 coordinator for students. All other questions or concerns relating to discrimination based on any other reasons should be directed to the Superintendent.

### **Student Records**

Policy FL

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take  
Lorenzo ISD Employee Handbook

precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records. The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records:

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

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

## **Parents and Student Complaints**

### **Policy FNG**

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

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

## **Administering Medication to Students**

### **Policy FFAC, FFAF**

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

## **Dietary Supplements**

### **Policies DH, FFAC**

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

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

### **Policy FFAC**

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

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

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

## **Student Conduct and Discipline**

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

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

## **Student Attendance**

### **Policy FEB**

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

## **Bullying**

### **Policy FFI**

Bullying is defined by §TEC 37.0832. All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying, including cyberbullying, to the campus principal. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students can be found at Lorenzo ISD policy online FFI (local).

## **Hazing**

### **Policy FNCC**

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

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