

Seminole Independent School District



Employee Handbook
2016-2017

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction..... | 7 |
| Employee handbook receipt..... | 8 |
| District information | 10 |
| Description of the district | 10 |
| District map | 10 |
| Mission statement, goals, and objectives..... | 11 |
| Board of trustees..... | 12 |
| Administration: | 13 |
| School directory..... | 14 |
| Employment..... | 15 |
| Equal employment opportunity | 15 |
| Job vacancy announcements..... | 15 |
| Employment after retirement..... | 15 |
| Contract and non-contract employment | 15 |
| Certification and Licenses | 16 |
| Searches and alcohol and drug testing..... | 17 |
| Health safety training..... | 18 |
| Reassignments and transfers..... | 18 |
| Workload and work schedules..... | 18 |
| Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk | 19 |
| Notification to parents regarding qualifications | 19 |
| Outside employment and tutoring | 20 |
| Performance evaluation | 20 |
| Employee involvement..... | 22 |
| Staff development..... | 23 |
| Compensation and benefits | 24 |
| Salaries, wages, and stipends..... | 24 |
| Paychecks | 24 |
| Automatic payroll deposit | 25 |
| Payroll deductions | 25 |
| Overtime compensation..... | 25 |
| Travel expense reimbursement..... | 26 |
| Health, dental, and life insurance | 26 |
| Supplemental insurance benefits | 26 |
| Cafeteria plan benefits (Section 125) | 27 |
| Workers' compensation insurance..... | 27 |
| Unemployment compensation insurance..... | 27 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Teacher retirement | 27 |
| Leaves and absences | 29 |
| Personal leave | 30 |
| State Sick leave..... | 30 |
| Local leave..... | 31 |
| Sick Leave Bank (or Pool)..... | 31 |
| Temporary disability..... | 31 |
| Family and medical leave (FML)—general provisions..... | 32 |
| Workers’ compensation benefits | 36 |
| Assault leave..... | 36 |
| Jury duty | 36 |
| Other court appearances | 37 |
| Military leave..... | 37 |
| Employee relations and communications | 38 |
| Employee recognition and appreciation | 38 |
| District communications..... | 38 |
| Complaints and grievances..... | 38 |
| Employee conduct and welfare- | 39 |
| Standards of conduct | 39 |
| Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation | 42 |
| Harassment of students..... | 42 |
| Reporting suspected child abuse..... | 43 |
| Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children | 44 |
| Technology Resources..... | 45 |
| Personal Use of Electronic Media | 45 |
| Use of Electronic Media with Students | 47 |
| Criminal history background checks | 49 |
| Employee arrests and convictions | 49 |
| Alcohol- and Drug-abuse prevention | 50 |
| Tobacco Products and E-cigarette Use..... | 50 |
| Fraud and financial impropriety | 51 |
| Conflict of interest..... | 51 |
| Gifts and favors | 52 |
| Copyrighted materials..... | 52 |
| Associations and political activities | 52 |
| Charitable Contributions | 53 |
| Safety | 53 |
| Possession of firearms and weapons | 53 |
| Visitors in the workplace..... | 53 |
| Asbestos management plan | 54 |
| Pest control treatment | 54 |
| Established Standard of Dress for Seminole ISD Employees..... | 55 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| General procedures | 56 |
| Bad weather closing..... | 56 |
| Emergencies..... | 56 |
| Purchasing procedures..... | 56 |
| Name and address changes..... | 56 |
| Personnel records..... | 57 |
| Building use..... | 57 |
| Termination of employment | 58 |
| Resignations..... | 58 |
| Dismissal or non-renewal of contract employees..... | 58 |
| Dismissal of non-contract employees..... | 58 |
| Exit interviews and procedures..... | 59 |
| Reports to Texas Education Agency | 59 |
| Reports concerning court-ordered withholding..... | 60 |
| Student issues | 60 |
| Equal educational opportunities | 60 |
| Student records | 60 |
| Parent and student complaints | 61 |
| Administering medication to students | 61 |
| Dietary supplements | 61 |
| Psychotropic drugs | 61 |
| Student conduct and discipline | 62 |
| Student attendance..... | 62 |
| Bullying | 62 |
| Hazing..... | 62 |

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 Toby Miller, Assistant Superintendent.

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

Employee handbook receipt

Name

Campus/department

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

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

Electronic format available at <http://www.seminoleisd.net/default.aspx?name=pub.main>

Please indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box below:

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

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

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

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

Signature

Date

Note: You have been given two copies of this form. Please sign and date one and keep it. Sign and date the other copy and forward it to your campus administrator/department supervisor. Employee handbook receipt

Employee handbook receipt

Name _____

Campus/department _____

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

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

Electronic format available at <http://www.seminoleisd.net/default.aspx?name=pub.main>

Please indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box below:

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

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

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

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

Signature

Date

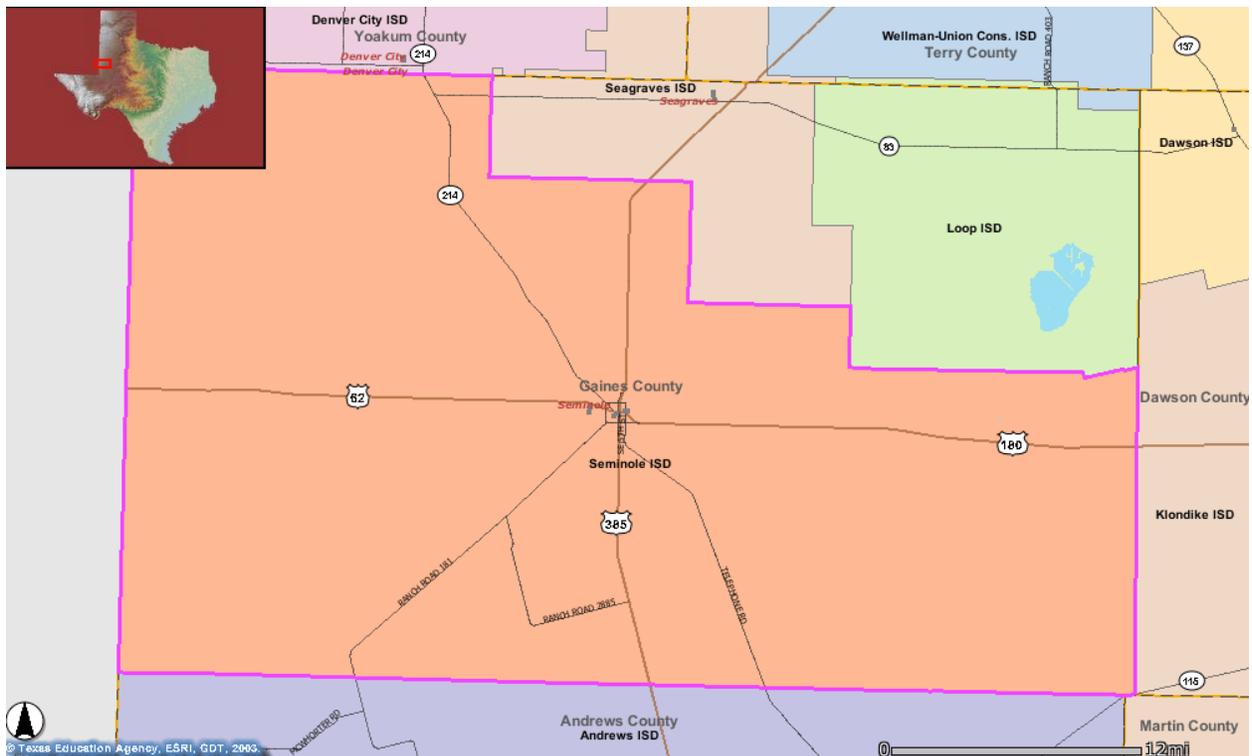
Note: You have been given two copies of this form. Please sign and date one and keep it. Sign and date the other copy and forward it to your campus administrator/department supervisor.

District information

Description of the district

Seminole, Texas is a community of some 6700 individuals located in the northern part of the oil-rich Permian Basin and the southern edge of the Agricultural South Plains of Texas. The economy is primarily dependent on oil production and agriculture. Gaines County has ranked among the top two counties in the State of Texas in both oil and cotton production for many years. In addition to a strong agriculture and oil economy, Gaines County enjoys a low crime rate, low unemployment rate, favorable climate and easy access to the mountains of New Mexico, the sand hills of West Texas and rugged wilderness of the Big Bend area. Indeed, Seminole is a “quality” community in which to work, play and raise a family.

District map



Mission statement, goals, and objectives

Policy AE

Seminole Independent School District, in cooperation with parents and community, will develop well-educated citizens, who are assets to society, by maintaining a high quality staff utilizing the latest technology and resources.

Goal 1 Seminole ISD will meet or exceed state performance standards at the Regional and State levels.

Goal 2 Instruction will be provided by highly qualified professional staff.

Goal 3 Technology will be integrated into instructional, administrative, and community programs.

Goal 4 The district will ensure a safe environment conducive to student learning.

Goal 5 The district will collaborate efforts with parents/guardians to increase student learning and success.

Board of trustees

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

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

The board of trustees is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the district's children. Board members are elected at large (3 positions) and by place (4 positions) and serve three-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

- Ben Royston, President (place 2)
- Kevin Petty, VP (at-large)
- Rex Darby, Secretary (place 3)
- Janelle Sullivan Asst. Secretary (place 1)
- Shane Wimmer, (place 4)
- David Bergen, at-large
- Scott Nolen, at-large

The board usually meets at the Board Room located at 207 SW 6th Street on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 pm. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted at the Superintendent's office at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice. All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the board to go into a closed session from which the public and others are excluded. Closed session may occur for such things as discussing prospective gifts or donations, real-property acquisition, certain personnel matters including employee complaints, security matters, student discipline, or to consult with attorneys regarding pending litigation.

Administration:

Gary Laramore, Superintendent
Toby Miller, Assistant Superintendent
Leland Bearden, Girls' Athletic Director
Jesse Greenfield, Director of Operations
Kent Jackson, Boys' Athletic Director
Andrea Kissick, District Testing Coordinator
Jay Lashaway, Chief Financial Officer
Ben Runyan, Director of Special Education
Stephanie Stone, Director of Technology
Cindy Therwhanger, Director of Food Services

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

School directory

F J Young Elementary
Sherrie Warren, Principal
Kathy Rich, Assistant Principal
2100 SW Ave B
(432) 758-3636

Seminole Primary
Kathy Moore, Principal
Rebecca Lashaway, Assistant Principal
601 SW Ave B
(432) 758-5841

Seminole Elementary
Kevin McCasland, Principal
Aine Lopez, Assistant Principal
401 SW Ave B
(432) 758-3615

Seminole Junior High
Daylan Sellers, Principal
Brian Ritchey, Assistant Principal
600 NW Ave J
(432) 758-9431

Seminole High School
Robert Chappell, Principal
Randy Hicks, Assistant Principal
Randy Jones, Assistant Principal
2100 NW Ave D
(432) 758-5873

Seminole Success Center
Seth Davis, Principal
206 SW 3rd Street
(432) 758-2772

Employment

Equal employment opportunity

Policies DAA, DIA

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to discrimination on any of the reasons listed above should contact the Title IX Coordinator: Gary Laramore, and Section 504 Coordinator: Ben Runyan, 207 SW 6th Street, Seminole, TX 79360, 432-758-3662.

Job vacancy announcements

Policy DC

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the district's website, at the central administration building, and at the office of each campus. In addition, vacancy announcements are posted on cable Channel 16. Job vacancies are posted for a minimum of 10 days.

Employment after retirement

Policy DC

Seminole ISD considers the "best interest of the district" when considering employment after retirement. 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 Web Site (www.trs.texas.gov).

Contract and non-contract employment

Policy DC Series

State law requires the district to employ all full-time professional employees in positions requiring a certificate from State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and nurses under probationary, term, or continuing contracts. Employees in all other positions are employed at-will or by a contract that is not subject to the procedures for non-renewal 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 probationary contracts 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 and continuing 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. Campus principals and central office administrators are employed under two-year term contracts. The superintendent is employed under a three-year term contract. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract and employment policies.

Non-certified professional and administrative employees. Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as non-instructional administrators) are employed by a two-year contract that is not subject to the procedures for non-renewal or termination under the Texas Education Code.

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

Policy DBA, DF

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to Toby Miller, Assistant Superintendent, in a timely manner.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or

revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact Toby Miller, Assistant Superintendent, if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

Searches and alcohol and drug testing

Policy CQ, DHE

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

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

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

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted 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 is otherwise subject to alcohol and drug testing will receive a copy of the district's policy, the testing requirements, and detailed

information on alcohol and drug abuse and the availability of assistance programs. Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact Jesse Greenfield, Director of Operations.

Health safety training

Policies DBA, DMA

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

Reassignments and transfers

Policy DK

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the superintendent or designee when the superintendent determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the district. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Campus reassignments must be approved by the principal at the receiving campus except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time 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).

Employees with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. 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 Central Administration office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

Workload and work schedules

Policies DEA, DEAB, DK, DL

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

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

Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees. Support employees are employed at will and will 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* for additional information.

Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk

Policies DEA, DEAB, DG

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

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

Notification to parents regarding qualifications

Policies DK, DBA

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

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

certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call Toby Miller, Assistant Superintendent.

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.

The District shall establish an appraisal calendar each year.

TEACHER APPRAISAL GENERAL GUIDELINES. Teacher appraisals shall be conducted according to the following general guidelines:

1. All teachers shall have an appraisal at least once during each five-year period.
2. Every teacher shall be engaged in an annual review process developed by the District- or campus-level decision-making committee.
3. Principals/appraisers shall be familiar with the current teaching performance of all teachers on their campus.
4. Principals/appraisers may require a teacher to have a complete appraisal at any time.
5. Experienced teachers new to a campus shall be appraised within the appraisal process during the first year.
6. Teachers new to the District shall be appraised with the appraisal process during the first year of employment with the District.

7. Teachers shall continue to complete the Teacher Self-Report (TSR) within established time lines. Appraisal training shall continue to be provided to all teachers annually.
8. See Policy DNB regarding appraisal of other certified professional staff.

NOT ELIGIBLE FOR LESS-THAN-ANNUAL APPRAISAL. Participation in the complete appraisal process shall be required for:

1. Teachers on a probationary contract.
2. Teachers currently on an intervention plan or whose performance indicates a need for an intervention plan.
3. Teachers whose performance indicates the teacher is at risk for a proposed contract non-renewal recommendation.
4. Teachers whose most recent appraisal was less than proficient in any domain.

ELIGIBLE FOR LESS-THAN-ANNUAL APPRAISAL. Teachers eligible for a less-than-annual appraisal (a waiver) shall meet all of the following criteria:

1. Have received an appraisal rating of proficient or the equivalent in all domains on the most recent appraisal (as long as the appraisal is not more than five years old).
2. Have signed a one-year appraisal waiver agreement form stating that the teacher understands and agrees not to be appraised with the complete appraisal process/document. The waiver is for one year only and must be signed no later than the last day of the first three weeks of instruction.

PRINCIPAL OR DISTRICT DISCRETION. Either the District or a principal may elect to appraise all teachers on the campus using the complete appraisal during the principal's first year on the campus.

REINSTATEMENT OF COMPLETE APPRAISAL. Any principal/appraiser may reinstate a complete appraisal by filling out the appraisal reinstatement notice and presenting the completed form to the teacher in a formal conference. A teacher who requests reinstatement of the complete appraisal shall do so by the end of the first six-weeks of the school year.

ANNUAL APPRAISAL FEEDBACK. To allow the principal/appraiser and a teacher to discuss performance and progress made during the year, the principal/appraiser shall hold an annual review with each teacher who is qualified for the appraisal waiver and who has signed the appraisal waiver agreement form.

CONFIDENTIALITY. Teacher appraisals are by law confidential. Administrators shall not publish or post calendars that list names and room locations for feedback sessions or 45-minute observations.

SCHEDULE LIMITATIONS. In addition to those days on which observations are prohibited by law [see DNA(LEGAL)], the District shall not schedule observations on the day before and the day after a school holiday, days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year examinations, or days scheduled for state-mandated assessments or other standardized tests.

FIRST OBSERVATION. First classroom observations of teachers shall be scheduled within a three-week window.

ALTERNATE APPRAISERS. The list of qualified appraisers who may appraise a teacher in place of the teacher's supervisor shall be approved by the Board.

SECOND OBSERVATION APPRAISER. Upon a teacher's request for a second appraiser, the Superintendent or designee shall select the second appraiser from a pre-established roster of trained appraisers.

SCHEDULING. Second appraisals shall be scheduled within a three-week window.

SCORES. The Board shall ensure that the Superintendent or designee establish procedures regarding how domain scores from first and second appraisals will be used.

PROBATIONARY TEACHERS. Written evaluations and other evaluative information need not be considered prior to a decision to terminate a probationary contract at the end of the contract term. [See DFAB(LEGAL)]

EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS. When relevant to decisions regarding term contracts, written evaluations of a teacher's performance, as documented to date, and any other information the administration deems appropriate, shall be considered in decisions affecting contract status.

GRIEVANCES. Complaints regarding teacher appraisal shall be addressed in accordance with DGBA(LOCAL).

Employee involvement

Policies BQA, BQB

At both the campus and district levels, Seminole 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 Toby Miller, Assistant Superintendent.

Staff development

Policy DMA

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

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

Compensation and benefits

Salaries, wages, and stipends

Policy 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 and academic administrative employees are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See *Compensation*.)

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.

Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, employees with a Master's Degree will be paid a stipend of \$3,000 if one of the following conditions is met:

- Master's Degree is in one of the core content areas specified in the No Child Left Behind Education Act (math, science, English/Language Arts, history, fine arts, foreign language) or
- Employee with a Master's Degree is eligible to teach a dual credit course

All other Master's Degrees will be paid a \$1,000 stipend.

Employees should contact Jay Lashaway, Chief Financial Officer for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

Paychecks

All employees are paid monthly. During the school year, paychecks are delivered to each campus. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization.

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

Paychecks are issued on the 22nd of each month. If payday falls on the weekend or school holiday, paychecks will be issued on the last work day prior to the 22nd.

Automatic payroll deposit

Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of one month is necessary to activate this service. Contact Jay Lashaway, Chief Financial Officer, for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Payroll deductions

Policy CFEA

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

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

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

Overtime compensation

Policy DEAB

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

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

Employees may be compensated for overtime at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 hours of comp time.

- Comp time must be used in the duty year that it is earned.
- Use of comp time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval as workload permits, or at the supervisor's direction.
- An employee may be required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Time sheets 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 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 be reimbursed for expenses other than mileage.

Health, dental, and life insurance

Policy CRD

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

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

TRS retirees who are enrolled in TRS-Care (retiree health insurance program) and employees who are not contributing TRS members who are regularly scheduled to work less than 10 hours per week are not eligible to participate in TRS-ActiveCare.

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

Supplemental insurance benefits

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for dental, vision, supplemental life, catastrophic illness and/or disability. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact Jay Lashaway, Chief Financial Officer for more information.

Cafeteria plan benefits (Section 125)

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

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

Workers' compensation insurance

Policy CRE

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from South Plains School Workers' Compensation Program effective September 1, 1993. 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 campus/department supervisor. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. (See *Workers' compensation benefits* 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 Jay Lashaway, Chief Financial Officer.

Teacher retirement

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

August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify Jay Lashaway, Chief Financial Officer as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits are available from Jay Lashaway, Chief Financial Officer. Additional inquiries should be addressed to: 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 at (www.trs.texas.gov). (See *Employment after Retirement* for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools).

Leaves and absences

Policy DEC, DECA, DECB

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

Leave must be used in half-day increments. However, if an employee is taking intermittent family and medical leave, leave shall be recorded in one-hour 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 Leave
- State Sick Leave
- State Personal Leave

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

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

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

employees who are on unpaid leave.

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

Personal leave

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of personal leave is equivalent to the number of hours per day in an employee's usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time. There is no limit on the accumulation of state personal leave, and it can be transferred to other Texas school districts and is generally transferable to education service centers. 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 leave 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 in advance of the anticipated absence to his or her principal or supervisor. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor.

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

State Sick leave

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State sick leave can be used only in 5 day increments except when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis or when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

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

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

Local leave

Seminole ISD awards all employees two days of paid local personal leave per 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. There is no limit on the accumulation of local personal leave, but it cannot be transferred to other Texas school districts.

Sick Leave Bank (or Pool)

The district's policy (DEC Local) concerning local leave, reimbursement at retirement and the catastrophic sick leave bank is listed as follows:

<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/083903/>

Temporary disability

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, Jay Lashaway, CFO, 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.

Family and medical leave (FML)—general provisions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Benefits and Protections. During FML leave, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FML leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. Use of FML leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FML protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave.

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

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

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

Unlawful Acts by Employers. FML makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right protected under FML;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FML or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FML.

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

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

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

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

Local family and medical leave provisions

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period (*insert only one of the phrases below here*).

- beginning on the first duty day of the school year
- from July 1 through June 30
- from January 1 through December 31
- measured backward from the date an employee uses FML leave
- measured forward from the date an individual employee's first FML leave begins

Use of paid leave. Family and medical leave runs concurrently with accrued sick and

personal leave, temporary disability leave, compensatory time, assault leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The district will designate the leave as family and medical leave, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

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

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

District contact. Employees that require FML leave or have questions should contact Jay Lashaway, Chief Financial Officer, for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Temporary disability leave

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

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

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

When an employee is ready to return to work, Jay Lashaway, should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to resume regular duties. Professional

employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned as soon as an appropriate position is available. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, professional employees will be reinstated at the beginning of the following school year.

Workers' compensation benefits

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

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

Assault leave

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

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

Jury duty

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

Other court appearances

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

Military leave

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

Re-employment after military leave. Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment within the period of time specified by law to Toby Miller, Assistant 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 Jay Lashaway, Chief Financial Officer for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Employee relations and communications

Employee recognition and appreciation

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in district publications, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities also include presentations of the Outstanding Educator and Outstanding Auxiliary Employee at the employee appreciation banquet.

District communications

Throughout the school year, the Seminole ISD offers employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements. They include the following:

- **SISD Cable Channel 16**
- **SISD website: www.seminoleisd.net**
- **Seminole Sentinel, KIKZ/KSEM**
- **payroll inserts**

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 concerns or complaints with their supervisors or an appropriate administrator at any time.

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

PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS: EMPLOYEE
COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

DGBA(LOCAL)

<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/083903/>

Employee conduct and welfare-

Standards of conduct

Policy DH

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

- Recognize and respect the rights and property of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action.
- Know and comply with department and district procedures and policies.
- 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. Violations of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day the superintendent knew of the incident. (See *Texas Education Agency* for additional information).

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

Texas Educators' Code of Ethics

Statement of Purpose

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

student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. (19 TAC 247.1(b))

Professional Standards

1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
- (ii) the subject matter of the communication;

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

Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation

Policies DH, DIA, DIA (Local)

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.

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

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

DIA (Local)

<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/083903/>

Harassment of students

Policies DHB, DH, FFG, FFH

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

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

DHB (Legal), FFH (Local)
<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/083903/>

Reporting suspected child abuse

Policies DHB, DG, DH, FFG, GRA

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

- Mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Physical injury that results in substantial harm to a student or minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the student or minor, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline; or
- Sexual conduct harmful to a student's or minor's mental emotional, or physical welfare.

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

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to the Seminole Law Enforcement Center (432-758-9871), 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 retaliating against an employee who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

An employee's failure to make the required report may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. 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 to the appropriate state agency. In addition, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and neglect. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at

FFG (Legal)

<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/083903/>

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 otherwise maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

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

Reporting Crime

Policy DG

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

provides employees with the right to report a crime witnessed at the school to any peace officer with authority to investigate the crime.

Technology Resources

Policy CQ

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

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

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

Employees are required to abide by the provisions of the district's acceptable use agreement and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary and legal action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact Stephanie Stone, Director of Technology.

Personal Use of Electronic Media

Policy DH

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

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

employee's page, and for Web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

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

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

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

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

Use of Electronic Media with Students

Policy DH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

social network page (“professional page”) for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee’s professional page.

- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators’ Code of Ethics including:
 - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
 - Copyright law [Policy CY]
 - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DHB]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with one or more currently-enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

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

Criminal history background checks

Policy DBAA

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

Employee arrests and convictions

Policy DH

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

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

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

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

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

Alcohol- and Drug-abuse prevention

Policies DH, DI

Seminole 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:

DH(Local) and DI (Exhibit)

<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/083903/>

Tobacco Products and E-cigarette Use

Policies DH, GKA, FNCD

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

Fraud and financial impropriety

Policy CAA

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

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

Conflict of interest

Policy CB, DBD

Employees are required to disclose in writing to the district any situation that creates a potential conflict of interest with proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities

or creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interests of the district. This includes the following:

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

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

Gifts and favors

Policy DBD

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

Copyrighted materials

Policy CY

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

Associations and political activities

Policy DGA

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

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

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

Charitable Contributions

Policy DG

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

Safety

Policy CK series

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact Jesse Greenfield, Director of Operations.

Possession of firearms and weapons

Policies FNCG, GKA

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

Visitors in the workplace

Policy GKC

All visitors are expected to enter any district facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be

escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the district premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

Asbestos management plan

Policy CKA

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

Pest control treatment

Policies DI, CLB

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

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located at the main entrance of each campus. 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.

Established Standard of Dress for Seminole ISD Employees

The purpose in establishing a district-wide code of dress is to reflect professionalism in dress, establish consistency, and to identify exceptions. As professionals, we must set an example that is above that required of students.

Criteria for Staff

Dress should be:

1. Professional
2. An example and role model to students, staff, and community
3. Exemplify expectations of the community and the board

All staff will be expected to dress professionally.

In addressing current styles, the following will be acceptable for female employees:

- Capri pants-coordinated and professional style

In addressing current styles, the following will be acceptable for male employees:

- Grooming—all hair, mustaches, and beards must be neatly groomed and well maintained.

Fridays may be considered casual days and the following may be worn:

- Denim jeans (jeans should be dressed up and not dressed down)

The following are not considered professional attire:

- Tight stretch pants (leggings)
- T-shirts (exception: on game days with SISD spirit logos)
- Shorts or Mini skirts (*see Student Code of Conduct*)
- Wind suits
- Tattoos shall be covered
- Piercings (other than in the ear for females)
- Plugs or gauges

Exceptions may be approved by the building principal for special occasions or duty assignments.

Style and taste are difficult issues to mandate. The expectation for Seminole ISD employees is that we present ourselves as role models to the students with whom we work by exemplifying standards of dress that would be professional.

General procedures

Bad weather closing

The district may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late, to release students early, [or to cancel school, district officials will post a notice on the district's Web site and notify](#) the following radio and television stations:

- ***KIKZ/KSEM Radio Station 1250 AM and 106.3 FM (Seminole)***
- ***KPER FM 100.9 and 95.7 (Hobbs, NM)***
- ***Television KMID Channel 2 (Midland)***
- ***Television KOSA Channel 7 (Odessa)***
- ***Television KWES Channel 9 (Midland)***
- ***Television KCBD Channel 11(Lubbock)***
- ***Television KAMC Channel 28 (Lubbock)***
- **www.seminoleisd.net**
- ***School Messenger automated phone system***
- ***Seminole ISD Facebook***

Emergencies

Policy CKC, CKD

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

Purchasing procedures

Policy CH

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the purchasing department at the Central Administration 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 Jay Lashaway, Chief Financial Officer for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Name and address changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the

Central Administration Office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. Forms to process a change in personal information can be obtained from Cindy Black, Secretary for Personnel and Curriculum.

Personnel records

Policy DBA GBA

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

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

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

Building use

Policies DGA, GKD

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

Termination of employment

Resignations

Policy DFE

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

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

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

Dismissal or non-renewal of contract employees

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

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be non-renewed 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 time lines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or non-renewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee. Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when the employee's certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the time lines and procedures can be found in the DF series policies that are provided to employees or are available on line.

Dismissal of non-contract employees

Policy DCD

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age,

disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. 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*).

Exit interviews and procedures

Policy DC and CY

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

Reports to Texas Education Agency

Policy DF, DHB

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

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

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

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

Reports concerning court-ordered withholding

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

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

Student issues

Equal educational opportunities

Policies FB, FFH

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students on any of the bases listed above should be directed to Gary Laramore, Superintendent.

Student records

Policy FL

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

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

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student

records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

Parent and student complaints

Policy FNG

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

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

Administering medication to students

Policy FFAC

Only designated employees can administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. Exceptions apply to the self-administration of asthma medication, medication for anaphylaxis (e.g., EpiPen[®]), and medication for diabetes management, if the medication is self-administered in accordance with district policy and procedures. A student who must take prescription 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 bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the student handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

Bullying

Policy FFI

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

FFI (Local)

<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/083903/>

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.

Index

A

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Administering medication to students | 60 |
| Administration | 15 |
| Alcohol and drug testing | 19 |
| Alcohol- and Drug-abuse prevention | 49 |
| Arrests and convictions | 48 |
| Asbestos management plan | 52 |
| Assault leave | 36 |
| Associations | 51 |
| At-will employment | 18 |
| Automatic payroll deposit | 26 |

B

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Bad weather closing | 55 |
| Benefits | 25 |
| Cafeteria plan benefits | 27 |
| Leaves and absences | 29 |
| Teacher retirement | 28 |
| Workers’ compensation benefits | 35 |
| Board | |
| general meeting information | 14 |
| meeting schedule | 14 |
| members | 14 |
| Breaks | 21 |
| Breast milk | 21 |
| Building use | 56 |
| Bullying | 61 |

C

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Cafeteria plan benefits | 27 |
| Certification | |
| first aid and CPR | 20 |
| parent notification | 21 |
| Certification and Licenses | 18 |
| Change of address | 55 |
| Charitable Contributions | 51 |
| Child abuse reporting | 43 |
| Code of ethics | 39 |
| Communication | 38 |

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Compensation | 25 |
| Complaints | |
| employee | 38 |
| parent and student | 59 |
| Conflict of interest | 50 |
| Contract | |
| employment | 17 |
| non-certified employees | 18 |
| Copyrighted materials | 51 |
| Court appearances | 36 |
| Court-ordered withholding | 58 |
| Crime reporting | 44 |
| Criminal history background checks | 48 |
| D | |
| Dietary supplements | 60 |
| Directories | |
| school | 16 |
| Disclaimer | 6 |
| Dismissal | |
| contract employees | 57 |
| non-contract employees | 57 |
| District | |
| communications | 38 |
| goals and objectives | 13 |
| information | 12 |
| map | 12 |
| mission statement | 13 |
| Dress Code (employee) | 54 |
| Drug-abuse prevention | 49 |
| Drugs, psychotropic | 60 |
| E | |
| Electronic communications | 45, 46 |
| Emergencies | 55 |
| Employee | |
| conduct and welfare | 39 |
| involvement | 24 |
| recognition | 38 |
| responsibility for reading handbook | 8 |
| standard of dress | 54 |
| Employee handbook receipt | 8 |
| Employment | |
| after retirement | 17 |
| at-will | 18 |
| contract | 17 |
| outside | 21 |
| Equal educational opportunities | 59 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Equal employment opportunity | 17 |
| Every Student Succeeds Act | 22 |
| Exit interviews | 58 |
| F | |
| Family and medical leave | 32 |
| Firearms | 52 |
| Fraud | 50 |
| G | |
| General procedures | 55 |
| Gifts and favors | 50 |
| Goals and objectives | 13 |
| Grievances | 38 |
| H | |
| Handbook | |
| design | 6 |
| distribution | 8 |
| legal considerations | 6 |
| legal review | 6 |
| receipt | 8 |
| Harassment | 42 |
| Harrassment | |
| student | 42 |
| Hazing | 61 |
| Health insurance | 27 |
| Health safety training | 19 |
| I | |
| Insurance | |
| health, dental, and life | 27 |
| supplemental | 27 |
| unemployment | 28 |
| workers' compensation | 28 |
| Internet use | 45, 46 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| J | |
| Job vacancy announcements | 17 |
| Jury duty | 36 |
| L | |
| Leave | |
| assault | 36 |
| court appearances | 36 |
| discretionary | 30 |
| family and medical | 32 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| jury duty | 36 |
| local | 31 |
| medical certification | 29 |
| military | 36 |
| nondiscretionary | 30 |
| personal | 30 |
| sick | 30 |
| temporary disability | 31 |
| workers' compensation | 35 |
| Leaves and absences | 29 |
| M | |
| Maltreatment of Children | 44 |
| Medical Certification | 29 |
| Medications | 60 |
| Military leave | 36 |
| Mission statement | 13 |
| N | |
| Name and address changes | 55 |
| Nonrenewal | 57 |
| Nursing mothers | 21 |
| O | |
| Outside employment | 21 |
| Overtime | |
| compensatory time off | 26 |
| defined | 26 |
| pay | 26 |
| P | |
| Parent and student complaints | 59 |
| Parent notification | 21 |
| Paychecks | 25 |
| deductions | 26 |
| Payroll | |
| schedule | 25 |
| statements | 25 |
| Performance evaluation | 22 |
| Personal leave | 30 |
| Personnel records | 56 |
| Pest control treatment | 52 |
| Policy changes | 6 |
| Political activities | 51 |
| Possession of weapons | 52 |
| Psychotropic drugs | 60 |
| Publications | 38 |
| Purchasing procedures | 55 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Q | |
| Qualifying exigency | 32, 34 |
| R | |
| Reassignments | 20 |
| Resignations | |
| contract employees | 57 |
| non-contract employees | 57 |
| Retirement | |
| benefits | 28 |
| employment | 17 |
| S | |
| Safety | 51 |
| Salaries | 25 |
| School | |
| closing | 55 |
| directory | 16 |
| Searches | 19 |
| Sexual Abuse | 44 |
| Sick leave | 30 |
| Staff development | 24 |
| Standards of conduct | 39 |
| Stipends | 25 |
| Student | |
| attendance | 61 |
| complaints | 59 |
| discipline | 61 |
| issues | 59 |
| medication | 60 |
| records | 59 |
| Supplemental insurance | 27 |
| T | |
| TEA Reports | 58 |
| Teacher retirement | 28 |
| Technology Resources | 44 |
| Temporary disability leave | 31 |
| Termination | |
| dismissal during the contract term | 57 |
| exit interviews | 58 |
| non-contract employees | 57 |
| non-renewal | 57 |
| resignations | 57 |
| Termination, reports to TEA | 58 |
| Text messaging | 46 |
| Tobacco use | 49 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Transfers | 20 |
| Travel expense reimbursement | 27 |
| Tutoring | 21 |
| U | |
| Unemployment compensation insurance | 28 |
| V | |
| Visitors | 52 |
| W | |
| Wages | 25 |
| Weapons | 52 |
| Whistleblower Act | 44 |
| Workers' compensation | |
| benefits | 35 |
| insurance | 28 |
| Workload | 20 |