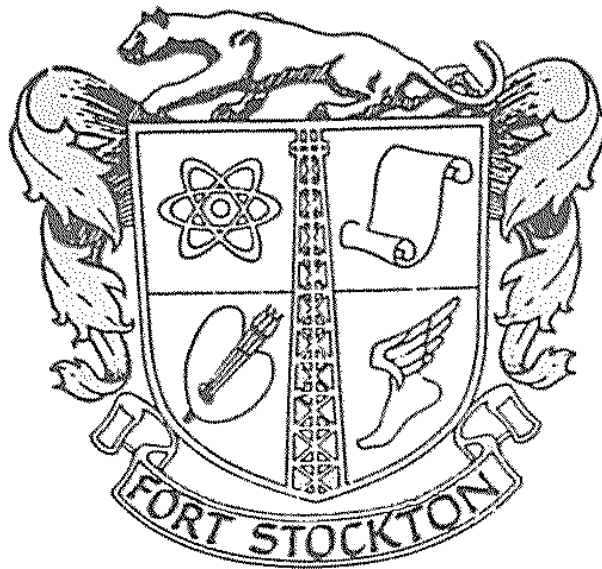


# FORT STOCKTON ISD

## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



2011-2012

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## **INTRODUCTION AND NOTICES**

Welcome—or welcome back—to Fort Stockton ISD. The purpose of this Employee Handbook is to inform you of important information about your employment in the district and about working with students of the Fort Stockton ISD. This Handbook does not replace the school district’s board-adopted policy manual, which contains all the official policies that govern the operation of the district and your employment in the district. This Handbook is not a “contract,” and we can make changes to it at any time.

Nothing in this Handbook supersedes or contradicts any district policy or changes any aspect of the employment relationship between you and the district or any terms and conditions of that relationship. All district employees serve on an at-will basis unless they have received, signed, and returned a written contract authorized by the board of trustees or a written employment agreement authorized by the board of trustees or the superintendent.

We have tried to make this Handbook easy to read and understand. When we say “you” or “your,” we mean the employee; when we say “we” or “our,” we mean the school district.

## **Board and Administration Information**

### Fort Stockton ISD Board of Trustees

- Ken Ripley, Ward 1 – President
- Freddie Martinez, Ward 2
- Jacob Vasquez, Ward 3
- Oscar Gonzalez, Ward 4
- Sandra Marquez, Ward 5
- Tom Ezell, Ward 6
- Glenda Pasqua, Ward 7

### Fort Stockton ISD Superintendent – Ralph Traynham

The board of trustees meets regularly on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the central office board room. All meetings are open to the public and employees are encouraged to attend if they have an interest in the topics for a particular meeting. Agendas are posted no later than 72 hours before each board meeting at the central administrative office and on the district's website, [www.fsisd.net](http://www.fsisd.net).

## **Equal Opportunity Employer**

Fort Stockton ISD is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate in employment based on sex, race, religion, national origin, age, disability, or status as a veteran.

The District's Title IX coordinator is Paula Traynham, 101 W Division, 432-336-4000. Our ADA Coordinator is Paula Traynham, 101 W Division, 432-336-4000. Employees with disabilities may contact the ADA coordinator or campus principal to initiate interactive reasonable accommodation plans when necessary or appropriate.

## **Right of Association**

All employees enjoy the right of association and are free to participate or not participate in professional or political organizations of their own choosing. No district administrator will require or coerce you to participate or not participate in any professional or political organization, make or refrain from making a charitable contribution, or attend a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions. No employment-related decisions will be made based on participation or nonparticipation in any professional or political organization or the decision to make or not make a charitable contribution.

School facilities and equipment, however, cannot be used for any political or partisan purpose, except as authorized by the principal or superintendent under district policy. We also will not permit partisan political activity or campaigning by employees in the classroom or other instructional settings or at school-

sponsored or school-sanctioned activities or events, including wearing campaign buttons.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYMENT IN FORT STOCKTON ISD**

**Personnel Records** We will maintain records about you at both the campus and central administrative offices. You have the responsibility to make sure that all required records, including your official service record, certificates, licenses, professional development records, and the like are submitted to the appropriate offices when requested. If you have a name or address change during the school year, you must notify us within five days. We will use the address and phone number on file to contact you with official communications, so it is critical that you keep these numbers up to date.

Under the Texas Public Information Act and because you are a public employee, **most of the records we have and keep related to your employment, including your salary, are available to anyone upon written request.** Employees may direct that their home addresses, emergency contact information, and telephone numbers not be released by completing the form, “Personal Information Election,” at the beginning of this Handbook. Official written evaluations for teachers and administrators are confidential and will not be released. If we receive a request for copies of your personnel records, we will consult with the school’s attorneys to determine which records must be released and will take the necessary steps under the Public Information Act to withhold records that are confidential.

Professional employees who obtain additional certification while employed with the District must provide copies of those certificates to the central office. If you agree to obtain additional certification at our request, you must submit transcripts and TExES registration forms and test results related to that additional certification to the central office.

We will maintain the following personnel records at the central administrative offices.

**All Employees:**

- Application
- References
- Criminal history record report
- Signed employee notices, including Drug-free Workplace
- Completed I-9 Form
- Completed W-4 Form
- Teacher Retirement System enrollment form

- Copy of social security card
- Notice of reasonable assurance (noncontract employees only)
- Evaluations
- Verification of additional training/workshops
- Employee leave request and approval forms
- Service record and any required attachments

**Professional Employees:**

- Credentials (valid Texas certificate or permit)
- Official college transcripts
- Employee-signed contract of employment or employment agreement, if applicable
- Teaching schedule or other assignment record
- Teacher-signed receipt for a copy of TEC Chapter 37, Subchapter A regarding student discipline and related local board policy
- Evaluations and PDAS information

**Educational Aides:**

- Certification
- Official transcripts of any college work

**Bus Drivers:**

- Proof that applicant is at least 18 years of age
- Proof of valid driver's license
- Pre-employment drug-screening test
- Post-offer employment physical
- Criminal history record report
- Driver's license check and proof of safe driving record
- Valid driver training certificate
- Previous employers' alcohol-and drug-screening test information

**Attendance and Absences:** Punctual and consistent attendance at work is a fundamental requirement of your employment in Fort Stockton ISD. **Excessive absences or repeated tardiness in reporting for duty can result in the termination of your employment.** "Excessive" absences are any that are not in compliance with our policies and procedures for taking available local, state, or federal leave. If you are going to be absent or late for work, you must contact your supervisor or principal no later than 7:30 a.m. This contact must be made every time you are absent or late unless you have provided your supervisor or principal with more specific long-term information from your treating health care provider.

We do not have a category of leave called "leave without pay." If you are absent in excess of the number of days of leave you have available under district policy, you

are simply absent and will not be paid for those days. Employees who are paid on a salary basis will have appropriate deductions made from the regular salary payment for absences in excess of accumulated leave. If you do not comply with our policies and procedure for notice of an absence or for requesting leave, you will not be paid for those days of absence even if you have leave available.

Basic Leave Information The complete text of the policy on leaves and absences [DEC (LEGAL) and (LOCAL)] is included in the Appendix, but we are providing a brief summary of the most commonly used kinds of leaves in this Handbook.

All full-time employees receive five days of state personal leave each year. Part-time employees or those who work less than a full year receive a pro-rated number of days. Additionally, the district provides 10 days of local leave each year. Refer to DEC (LOCAL) for specifics on using each kind of leave. You can always use accumulated state or local leave for your personal illness or injury or the illness or injury of an immediate family member.

Days taken as “personal leave” must be requested 5 days in advance. You cannot use personal leave during the first and last weeks of a semester, immediately before or after a holiday, or during state or local testing periods. Personal leave shall not exceed three consecutive workdays and the maximum number of absences for personal leave shall be five in a semester and ten in a school year. We will try always to honor timely requests for personal leave that comply with policy requirements, but your principal or supervisor may withdraw approval if unforeseeable absences among other staff (bad weather, flu or other transmittable disease) would affect the efficient and effective operation of the campus or department.

Family Medical Leave If you provided at least 1250 hours of service to the district in the 12 months preceding the first use or assignment of family medical leave, you are eligible to receive up to 12 weeks of family medical leave during the 12-month period stated in DEC (LOCAL). You can use family medical leave after the birth or adoption of a child or for a serious health condition of your own or of an immediate family member. Family medical leave is also available in some circumstances related to a family member’s military deployment and for a family member who has been injured in active military duty. During family medical leave, we will continue to maintain your individual participation in our health insurance program as if you were on active duty, but you will have to make arrangements for making payments of any employee portion you normally make for coverage.

When you can foresee the need for family medical leave, such as for child birth, scheduled surgery, or scheduled medical treatments, you must notify us and request the leave at least 30 days in advance. If 30 days notice is not possible, you must inform us of the need for leave at least two working days before the leave. In emergencies when the need for family medical leave is not foreseeable, you or a close family member must notify us of the need for family medical leave as soon as practicable, generally on the same day that you are aware of the need for family medical leave or the next business day.

Our policy requires concurrent use of family medical leave with all other kinds of leave, so some or all of your family medical leave may be with pay, depending on how much leave you have accumulated. If you are using family medical leave, we will communicate directly with you about the details of your absence.

Medical Certification We have the right to and will ask you to provide periodic information from your treating doctor to verify the need for family medical leave or other medical absences and to give us some idea of when you will be able to return to duty. We will provide forms for your doctor to complete. Your failure to provide the necessary information to us can affect your eligibility for leave and will be treated as a failure to follow district policy and procedures.

Medical Examinations We have the right to and will ask you to have a medical or psychological examination paid for by the district if we believe that your condition is interfering with the performance of your regular duties. Your failure to cooperate in this situation will be treated as a failure to follow district policy and comply with directives.

#### Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank

See Policy DEC (Local)

On-the-Job Injuries If you are injured while performing your duties for the district, you must notify your supervisor immediately so that we can comply with our responsibilities under workers' compensation laws. We provide workers' compensation coverage for all employees. If an injury at work causes you to be absent, it is your responsibility to inform us whether you wish to use accumulated leave in order to receive full pay during your absence to the extent of accumulated leave or whether you wish to save your accumulated leave and receive only the temporary income benefits that are available under the workers' compensation laws. **If you do not inform us of your choice, we will NOT charge your absence to accumulated leave and you will receive only temporary income benefits.** If absence because of a work-related injury also qualifies as a serious health condition under family medical leave, you will also be charged with family medical leave during your absence.

Administrative Leave The superintendent can order that any employee be placed on administrative leave, usually with pay, when he determines that it is in the district's best interest to do so.

Jury Duty You will be paid your regular rate of pay and will not use accumulated leave while you are responding to a call for jury duty. But if you are selected to serve, you must endorse your jury pay to the district to help defray the cost of a substitute.

**Vacations and Holidays:** Only employees in 12-month positions receive paid vacation. We encourage eligible employees to schedule and take vacation they have earned.

If you are in a position eligible for vacation, you will earn paid vacation days as described in policy DEC (Local). Vacation must be scheduled with your supervisor who may consider the needs of the district and other scheduled

absences in approving requests for vacation. The maximum number of vacation days that may carry over from one school year to the next is 10.

The annual district calendar published shows the days scheduled as paid holidays.

**Compensation, Benefits, and Pay Systems:** The board of trustees annually will adopt or approve salary and pay systems for all classes of employees in conjunction with the annual budget adoption process. We do not pay anyone on a “daily” basis; non-exempt employees are paid based on the hours worked within a pay period or on a monthly salary basis; contractual or exempt employees are paid on a monthly salary basis. The superintendent will make decisions about where to assign individual employees within the ranges and positions set in the systems. The Business Office will notify you at the beginning of the school year of your anticipated pay rate and whether you are classified as exempt or non-exempt for purposes of providing overtime or compensatory time. **This notice is not a contract; it is provided for your information only.** If we discover during the school year that either you or we made an error in that information, we will make adjustments to remaining salary or pay to correct the error. This correction during the payment term may increase or decrease your regular pay check.

We pay employees monthly on the 25<sup>th</sup>. A direct deposit option for your pay checks is available. If you wish to take advantage of this convenience, please contact the Payroll Department to make arrangements.

As a benefit to our employees and to provide a measure of predictability for employees’ personal budgeting purposes, we will calculate or estimate an expected monthly pay for all employees, whether employed by contract for a specific amount of money over the entire term or employed on an at-will basis at an hourly rate of pay. If you are under a contract for fewer than 12 months or in a position that does not require you to provide active service for 12 months of the year, we will set aside a portion of that monthly pay each month to provide a regular paycheck during the one or two months in the summer that you are not actively working. This is known as annualizing compensation. Each month, however, we will compare your estimated monthly pay with the number of hours or days actually worked, including days of paid leave in accordance with district policy, and will make adjustments as necessary to ensure that you are paid correctly for time worked.

**Overtime/Compensatory Time** If you are an employee who is covered by the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, you must keep accurate records of all time worked for the district. This means that you must record on the documents or through the system that we provide the actual time that you begin work each day, the time you take for lunch, and the time you stop working each day. We generally expect that non-exempt employees will not work more than 40 hours in a work week. Our work week begins at 12:00 am on Saturday and ends at 11:59 pm on Friday.

**All overtime must be approved in advance by your supervisor. Working overtime without prior authorization is insubordination and may result in the termination of your employment.**

You will receive 1½ times your regular rate of pay for every hour worked in a work week above 40 hours. This pay will be included in the regular payroll check immediately following the pay period in which the overtime was worked.

**Insurance** We will hold meetings with all staff at the beginning of each school year to provide information about the insurance programs that are available to you, including optional coverage for long-term and short-term disability, additional group life insurance, vision and dental coverage. We make a contribution to the basic health coverage for all employees and will make this contribution so long as you are using accumulated paid leave or family medical leave.

**Payroll Deductions** We will make all required state and federal deductions from your gross pay each pay period. We will comply with any court order to deduct child support payments from your gross pay and with any valid orders to deduct federal school loan payments or pay a portion of your wages directly to the Internal Revenue Service. Other regular deductions may include:

- amounts that you are required to pay to maintain health insurance coverage for yourself and any dependents you have chosen to include in the district's health plan,
- amounts that you elect to pay for optional insurance coverage or additional investments,
- professional organization dues if you have requested us to make those payments.

We provide a Section 125 Cafeteria Plan under federal tax law that allows you to request that some regular and optional deductions be made from your gross salary before federal income withholding taxes are calculated. We will hold information sessions at the beginning of the school year to explain this program and give you the opportunity to make decisions and complete any paperwork necessary to participate.

**Duties and Responsibilities:** All employees are subject to assignment and reassignment. At the campus level, the principal will ultimately determine your assignment. The superintendent can make assignments and reassignments between campuses and positions. Teachers may be assigned to any teaching assignment for which they are or can be qualified.

Your principal or supervisor can assign additional duties if needed in order to make sure that the campus or department is running effectively and efficiently. Ordinarily, you will not receive any additional compensation for those duties, except as may be necessary to provide overtime/ compensatory time for non-exempt employees.

The work day is not the same as the instructional day. Principals may set hours of work for employees that require you to be on duty before daily instruction begins and after daily instruction ends. The work day for employees is determined by their immediate supervisor.

If you wish to leave campus during the school day for any reason other than taking a duty-free lunch, you must receive permission from the principal or your direct supervisor and sign out in the office indicating the time and purpose for leaving campus and sign in when you return.

Visitors to the Workplace Any visitor for you during the working day must check in with the principal or supervisor and receive permission to go to your work site. Ordinarily we will not allow personal visitors to disrupt classroom instruction, so teachers should inform potential visitors of the time scheduled for a conference period or lunch period. We will not allow frequent or lengthy visits by friends or family to interfere with your performance of your assigned duties.

Duty-free Lunch All teachers and librarians will receive a 30-minute duty-free lunch at least four days each week. During this time, teachers and librarians have no responsibilities related to supervising students and may leave campus, provided they return within the allotted 30 minutes. If we are experiencing a personnel shortage, economic conditions that limit our ability to hire lunchroom monitors or support staff for this purpose, or in unforeseen circumstances, we may have to assign teachers and librarians to supervise students during their lunch no more than one day per week. We will make efforts, though, to provide lunch room supervision using parent volunteers or support staff so that teachers and librarians can be provided a duty-free lunch each school day.

Faculty/Staff Meetings Your principal will periodically schedule meetings for all teachers and other professional staff and sometimes for all staff. These meetings will usually be in late afternoon after students have been released for the day. Important information about district and campus operation and programs at the campus is communicated in these meetings, which also provide an opportunity for employees to communicate ideas and issues to the administration. You must attend these meetings unless you have contacted the principal in advance and received permission to be absent.

Conference Period All teachers will receive a conference period of not less than 45 minutes daily. The purpose of the conference period is for teachers to plan and prepare instruction, to grade student work, to hold meetings with parents, and to hold meeting with students. We cannot require you to do anything else during your conference period; however, you are required to use your conference period for those stated purposes. You will not ordinarily be permitted to leave campus during your conference period to run errands, keep doctor or other appointments, or for any other purpose. Very occasionally, we may allow teachers to oversee another teacher's classroom during a conference period to provide for an unexpected absence or other administrative reason.

**Site-Based Committee and Other Committees:** Our district and campus site-based committees provide a valuable service to the district and the campus. If you are interested in serving on this or any other committee, please see your principal for more information.

**Staff Development:** A prepared, well-trained professional and instructional support staff is essential to our providing a quality education to all the students of

Fort Stockton ISD. We have scheduled 7 days of professional development into the annual calendar. On these days students will not be present, and professional and instructional support staff must participate in training and development opportunities, under the conditions and guidelines described here.

All of the scheduled professional development days are mandatory for all professional and instructional support staff to attend. During these days, all staff will participate in training in topics or areas that have been identified either in our annual district improvement plan or in your campus improvement plan. The calendar in the front of this Handbook identifies the mandatory professional development days.

We will provide a range of opportunities for training on all staff development days. However, teachers and other professional staff who have obtained training and professional development on their own may be permitted to substitute those training hours. In order to substitute individual professional development for required days, you must request the substitution from the principal in advance. Your principal will review your request in view of training areas and topics targeted in the campus improvement plan and in view of your assignment and need for training. Employees who have not made arrangements to substitute individual training or professional development must be present and participate in the training and development opportunities.

**Evaluations/Appraisals:** All employees will be evaluated or appraised in writing by their supervisors. Teachers will ordinarily be appraised annually, but may be appraised less frequently if they agree in writing and the most recent appraisal showed no areas of deficiency. However, everyone will be evaluated at least once every five years. You will have an opportunity for a conference with your supervisor to discuss your evaluation and expectations for performance. An important part of your supervisor's job is overseeing and assessing employee performance throughout the school year, and your supervisor may provide written documentation to you relating to your performance as he or she determines appropriate.

Teachers are appraised using the state Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) and will receive orientation to the system early each school year.

**Transfers/Reassignments:** You can request a transfer to another campus or department for the following school year by completing a Transfer Request Form and submitting it to the assistant superintendent no later than the last day of the current school year. We will talk to your current principal or supervisor and the principal or supervisor of the campus or department where you want to transfer. Under state law, the principal of the receiving campus has the authority to approve or reject all staff assigned to his or her campus.

The superintendent has the authority under state law and district policy to transfer or reassign any employee in the district.

We will usually post vacancies within the district on bulletin boards in the central administrative office and in the principal's office of each campus or on the district's website. All current district employees are eligible to apply for other jobs

in the district, but we will not consider any applicant for any position who does not meet the minimum requirements posted for the position. If a current employee is selected for an interview, the employee will be notified and an interview time scheduled.

**Safety:** We strive to maintain a safe and healthy work environment. All employees share the responsibility for helping to keep the workplace safe and to avoid injury to themselves or others. We will provide training from time-to-time for all employees on how to avoid accidents in the workplace. Violating safety standards pertinent to your assignment can result in disciplinary action. We remind you that you must report a job-related injury immediately to your supervisor so that the district can complete required reports under the workers' compensation statutes and rules.

We comply with the state Hazard Communication Act and maintain current lists of hazardous chemicals used in the district and current Material Safety Data Sheets. If you want or need this information, please contact your principal or supervisor.

Periodically, district buildings and grounds are treated by licensed or trained individuals to control unwanted pests, such as insects and rodents. We will post notices of those treatment dates as required by law and will schedule treatment times when students or employees are least likely to be in the building or on the grounds.

**Maintenance and Repairs:** We strive to keep all our facilities clean, well-maintained, and in good repair. Teachers and other employees must ensure that they do not store items in their classrooms or offices that will attract pests of any kind. If your classroom or office needs maintenance or a repair, complete a Maintenance Request Form and submit it to your principal or supervisor. If you believe that your work area or classroom is not being adequately cleaned, contact your principal or supervisor. Do not take it on yourself to direct the work schedule or activities of our custodial and maintenance staff.

**Standards of Conduct:** We expect all district employees to treat each other, students, and parents or other patrons of the district with common courtesy and respect at all times. We hold our students to a high standard of conduct, as expressed in the Student Code of Conduct, and we expect no less of our employees. All district employees serve as role models for our students and must conduct themselves at work and in public as honest, law-abiding citizens.

The link to the Educators' Code of Ethics is included in the last page of this handbook. By law, it applies to all district employees who hold a certificate issued by the State Board of Educator Certification. By local policy, it applies to all employees in the district. You should read and be familiar with the standards and expectations expressed there because these are the standards and expectations we will impose on you.

If you are arrested for or convicted of a felony or any crime of moral turpitude, you must report that fact to your principal or immediate supervisor within 3 days. Offenses involving moral turpitude include without limitation theft or attempted theft of any kind, fraud of any kind, sexual offenses, any assaultive or violent

offense, bribery, perjury, drug or alcohol offenses, offenses constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code, or any other offense contrary to justice, honesty, modesty, or good morals.

**Sexual Harassment/Inappropriate Conduct** We do not allow employees to engage in sexual harassment of other employees, students, parents, patrons, or vendors to the school. No district employee is permitted to have a sexual or romantic relationship with a student, regardless whether the student or parent welcomes or approves of the relationship.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of any kind that is based on a person's sex or that would not occur but for the sex or gender of the person and that is so severe or pervasive that it deprives a person of the benefit of his or her job or education. Isolated incidents of inappropriate sexually charged conduct may not amount to sexual harassment, but they are still prohibited under our standards of conduct and should be reported to an administrator so that he or she can look into the situation.

We provide mandatory training periodically for all employees on how to recognize, prevent, and avoid sexual harassment.

If you believe you are the victim of sexual harassment or any other inappropriate conduct by a co-worker or even a student, you should contact the Title IX coordinator or your principal to discuss the matter and perhaps to file a complaint. Our complete policy on sexual harassment and the process for bringing a complaint is included in the Appendix to this Handbook.

**Inappropriate Social Relationships with Students** School employees are always in the public eye, and the expectation is that they will always observe professional boundaries in their personal relationships with students. District policy also prohibits employees from having "inappropriate social relationships" with students. So there is no confusion or misunderstanding about the District's standards on this issue, the following interactions or communications with students will generally be considered an "inappropriate social relationship":

- Communications with students, whether by telephone, email, instant message, Twitter, text message, or any other form of electronic or digital communication at any time, unless the communication is directly related to your assigned duties and responsibilities, e.g., the student's homework, class or team activity, school club, or other school-sponsored activity
- Engaging in personal conversations with students about either the student's or your own personal relationships or problems with spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, or significant other
- Taking a student away from school during the school day without obtaining express permission of the student's parent or the principal
- Visiting students at their homes when a parent is not present or inviting a student to your home without prior express permission of the student's parent

- Giving gifts of a personal nature (clothing, perfume or cologne, jewelry, etc.) to students at school or at any time without the parent's knowledge and permission
- Playing "favorites", e.g., allowing specific students to get away with conduct that is not permitted from other students

Other Harassment We also do not allow employees to harass each other based on race, color, gender, national origin or ethnicity, religion, age, or disability.

Harassment on these bases includes physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when it is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with someone's work performance; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive work environment; or otherwise adversely affects someone's employment opportunities.

If you always conduct yourself in the workplace with common courtesy and respect for your co-workers, harassment will never be a problem for you. You should be sensitive to the desires of your co-workers in making or displaying personal religious expressions in the workplace and should not engage in unwelcome religious discussions or proselytizing in the workplace.

If you believe you are the victim of harassment or any other inappropriate conduct by a co-worker or even a student, you should contact the Title IX coordinator or your principal to discuss the matter and perhaps to file a complaint. Our complete policy on harassment and the process for bringing a complaint is included in the Appendix to this Handbook.

Tobacco Use We do not allow any use of any tobacco product on school property, indoors or outdoors, at any time by any person. This prohibition includes any tobacco use in a school-owned vehicle. Because you are a role model for students, we also prohibit you from using any tobacco product in the presence of students when you are serving in any school-related capacity. If you are a tobacco user, you must leave school property—with the permission of your supervisor—in order to smoke or otherwise use a tobacco product.

Alcohol and Drug Use You are prohibited from using or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug or controlled substance at work or at any school-sponsored activity, whether you have an official role in that activity or not. If we have any reason to believe that you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs at school or while engaged in any school activity, we may transport you to a medical facility and require you to be tested, at our expense, to determine blood alcohol level or other relevant information.

We conduct pre-employment and random testing for drug and alcohol use for all transportation department employees and other employees in safety sensitive positions. If you are required to have a commercial driver's license or drive a school-owned vehicle as any part of your assigned duties and responsibilities, you will be subject to drug and alcohol testing. We are required to make a report to Texas Department of Public Safety if you test positive for alcohol or drugs, refuse

to provide a specimen for testing, or provide an adulterated or diluted, or substitute specimen for testing. If you have questions about the details of the drug testing program for employees, talk to your supervisor and also see policy DHE (LEGAL) and (LOCAL).

You cannot provide alcohol or illegal or prohibited drugs to students and must not allow students to use alcohol or illegal drugs in your presence, at any time or place. You are also prohibited from providing any type of over-the-counter medication or dietary supplement to students. Only designated school employees may administer prescription medications or over-the-counter medications to students.

**Weapons** You cannot bring any firearm or any other prohibited weapon on school property unless you have written permission from the superintendent. A list of prohibited weapons and their definitions is in the Code of Student Conduct and in board policy at FNCG (LEGAL).

**Appropriate Language** As a role model for students in the school setting, all employees are expected to refrain from using profanity or vulgar language, both in the presence of students and to each other.

**Dress and Grooming Standards** You must maintain a clean, neat, modest, professional appearance at school and school activities. All employees must display school identification at all times on school property or at school-sponsored activities. Food service and maintenance/custodial employees may be required to comply with specific dress and grooming standards for health and safety reasons. Your supervisor will provide more detailed information about these requirements.

**Searches** We can search you, your work area, your vehicle on school property, or your other possessions or property at school with or without your consent if we have a reasonable basis to believe that the search will turn up evidence of work-related misconduct. Any search we conduct will be reasonably related in scope to the circumstances that justified the search in the first place.

**Outside Employment:** You are free to have employment outside the district so long as those duties do not interfere with your performance of duties for the district and are not inconsistent with your position in the district. Teachers may not tutor their own students for pay during the school year.

**Work-Related Travel:** Any travel on our behalf must be approved by the principal or superintendent in advance. Reservations and costs for air travel and overnight accommodations will usually be made with district credit cards through the business office. We have an approved per diem rate for meals when traveling on school business. You will not be reimbursed for any amounts in excess of the approved per diem amount. No employee may receive both a per diem allotment and reimbursement for actual meal expenses. No employee may receive a per diem allotment for meals purchased with a district credit card. We will reimburse you for your out-of-pocket expenses for rental cars, parking, and other approved expenses at a rate not to exceed that permitted under the state travel allowance guide, provided you submit receipts and complete the district's required travel expense form. We will not reimburse you for alcohol and will not pay for personal charges on hotel/motel rooms such as in-room movies.

When feasible, work-related travel will be in a district-owned vehicle, and we will reimburse you at the rate authorized under the state travel allowance guide for gasoline purchased with your own credit card or money. If you use your own car for approved work-related travel, we will pay you for mileage at the current approved rate, but will not reimburse you for gasoline, which is included in the mileage rate.

**District Credit Cards:** We will issue district credit cards to certain employees, campuses, and departments. Your principal or supervisor will provide detailed information on use of district cards; however, these cards are for school-related and approved use only. If you are issued or allowed to use a district credit card, you may not use it for any personal expense at any time. It is a violation of the terms under which the card is issued to us and of employee standards of conduct for you to make a personal purchase with the card, even if you reimburse the district at a later time.

**Purchases:** All purchases with school funds, or for which you will seek reimbursement from school funds, must be approved in advance with an authorized purchase order. We will not pay for or reimburse for any purchases that do not comply with our required procedures. You will be personally responsible for any purchases that do not comply with our required procedures. **No school employee other than the superintendent and others specifically designated by the board of trustees can sign a contract that binds the district.** All contracts for purchases of goods or services, including vending contracts, yearbook publication contracts, graduation supply contracts, and so on must be submitted to the business office for review and approval **before they are signed.** If you sign a contract other than in accordance with these requirements, we will not be responsible for any amounts to be paid under that contract and you may be personally responsible.

**Complaints and Grievances:** We encourage you to attempt an informal resolution of any complaints or concerns you have about the workplace by talking to your principal or supervisor. However, you have the right to bring a written complaint about wages, hours, or conditions of work or if you believe that you have been harmed in some way by the violation of a law or policy. Complaints must be filed within 10 business days of the event you are complaining about. We will not entertain untimely complaints. Our policy generally provides for a three-step process, beginning with the principal or immediate supervisor and ending with the board of trustees.

At-will employees may complain about the termination of their employment through this process, and probationary teachers whose employment is terminated at the end of a school year in the best interest of the district may also use this process to present a concern about that decision to the board of trustees. All other employees must use the specific processes described in law and policy to raise issues related to contract nonrenewal or termination.

The full text of our DGBA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) policies regarding complaints and grievances and the form for filing a complaint are included in the Appendix to the Handbook.

**Resignation from Employment:** Any employee who has a probationary or term contract must submit a written resignation to the superintendent. Do not submit a resignation to the principal. The superintendent is the only person with authority to accept resignations from contract employees. Other employees can resign by informing their immediate supervisor, preferably in writing, who will inform the superintendent.

**Termination of Employment:** Please refer to our policies regarding termination or nonrenewal for the processes involved in ending employment in the district. Generally, at-will employees can be dismissed from employment at any time for any reason or no reason, provided it is not an illegal reason.

We will try to conduct an exit interview with every employee who leaves district employment for any reason. We will delay the delivery of the last paycheck until all district equipment, keys, or any other district-owned property or materials have been returned and accounted for.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT WORKING WITH STUDENTS IN FORT STOCKTON ISD**

Much of the information in this section of the Handbook applies primarily to teachers and other professional employees working directly with students on a daily basis. Some of the information, however, applies to all employees. We will use the term “employees” when we mean everyone and “teachers” when we mean professionals. We will also continue to use “you” and “your” as appropriate.

**Student Records and Confidentiality:** Education records and information maintained about students that is related to their education are confidential under federal law. You will often learn personal information about your students and their families in the course of your work for the district. You must not discuss students or their families—their conduct, their academic achievement or academic failings, or personal information—with anyone unless you need to share the information with another employee or someone working with the school district for a reason related to the child’s education. Board policy at FL contains complete information related to the confidentiality of student records.

**Discipline/Student Supervision and Control:** The board-approved Student Code of Conduct contains all the rules and requirements for conduct and discipline. You will receive a copy of the Code and must be familiar with the rules of conduct. Each employee has the responsibility to be mindful of student conduct at all times and to intervene if students are harming each other or school property. In other situations, if you observe student misconduct, promptly inform the principal or assistant principal. In most circumstances, only professional employees will actually impose or administer disciplinary consequences. Employees can use reasonable restraint of students to prevent injury to the student

or other students or employees, or to prevent property damage. However, students with disabilities can be restrained only in emergency situations.

Classroom teachers have the authority and responsibility to develop and communicate rules for classroom behavior. We expect you to handle minor disturbances in the classroom through these rules. However, if a student engages in classroom conduct that violates the Code of Conduct, complete a discipline referral form and send the student to the office.

Any employee who observes students acting in any way that could be construed as harassment or bullying under the code of conduct must promptly report the conduct to the principal or assistant principal and should intervene to correct or stop the conduct when possible. If you reasonably believe the conduct is sexual abuse or other maltreatment of a child, then you must also make the required report to Child Protective Services or local law enforcement.

Classroom teachers should not leave students unattended at any time and must not leave them unattended for more than a minute or two in an emergency. This rule is particularly important at the elementary grades, but also applies at the secondary grades. If you must leave your classroom during instruction because of an emergency, inform the office so that we can make arrangements to have an adult present in the classroom while you are gone.

**Emergency Procedures:** We have developed a district-wide plan for use in case of dangerous weather or other emergency or crisis situations. This plan is posted at each campus in the classrooms. You must be familiar with these procedures and follow them. Your calm demeanor and confidence in dealing with an emergency or crisis situation at school will help your students remain calm so that they can respond as needed. We will conduct emergency procedure exercises periodically—some announced to staff, some unannounced.

In situations where weather conditions may interfere with the school schedule, listen to KFST 860 AM or 94.3 FM, watch Channel 16 on the local cable, or check the district's website [www.fsisd.net](http://www.fsisd.net). The superintendent will make all decisions regarding the necessity for an early release or school closure because of the weather.

**Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect:** We provide annual training to all staff on recognizing the signs of sexual abuse or other maltreatment of a child, which includes child abuse and neglect, as those terms are defined in the Texas Family Code. All employees have a legal duty to make a report to local law enforcement or to Child Protective Services if they have reason to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected. A report that a parent or other person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of a child may have abused or neglected the child must be reported to Child Protective Services. Professionals and paraprofessionals who hold an aide certificate have a legal duty to make this report orally within 48 hours and to follow that with a written report. You have not fulfilled this duty if you simply make a report to your supervisor. While we want you to inform the principal if you believe a report is required, you must still make the report yourself. If you are not certain whether you have observed child abuse or neglect, you

should err on the side of reporting. Professionals can receive sanctions against their certificates and any person can face criminal charges for knowingly failing to make a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect. Your identity will be protected when you make a good faith report.

**Child Abuse Reporting Hotline 1-800-252-5400 | [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)**

**County Sheriff 432-336-3521**

**City Police 432-336-4600**

### **School Activities and Functions:**

During “Back-to-School” nights at the beginning of the school year, all teachers are required to be present unless you have made advance arrangements with the principal or are too sick to attend. This event is an opportunity to meet parents, explain briefly how you operate your classroom, and give parents an opportunity to ask questions and tell you things they think you need to know about their children.

We will let you know when you are expected to attend other events or activities.

**Parent Organizations:** We have a parent-teacher organization at each campus in the school district. We encourage teachers to be familiar with and take part in, as they choose, the activities of the parent group at their campus.

**Parent Relations:** All written and oral communications from teachers or other staff to parents must be professional and courteous and always made with the child’s best interest at heart. Teachers and other professionals should always respond as promptly as reasonable under the circumstances to parent communications to them, either in writing or by telephone.

We provide a conference period so that you can schedule meetings with parents at their request or at yours. If you schedule a meeting with a parent, you must inform the principal’s office so that we will know to expect the parent to check in. We generally encourage parents to visit their children’s classroom occasionally, but parents must make prior arrangements with you and you need to let us know in advance. Parents or other visitors must always check in at the principal’s office and receive a Visitor’s Pass. Do not allow parents to come directly to your room to pick up a child unless you have received prior specific authorization from the principal.

If for some reason a problem in communication develops between you and a parent, your principal or another administrator will be glad to be present at your conferences with the parent, at your request.

Only materials that have been approved by the principal can be sent home with students in their backpacks or otherwise. Do not rely on students to deliver important communications from you to their parents, such as progress reports, report cards, requests for a conference, or concerns about the child’s conduct or performance.

**Counseling Program:** We have a comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program and encourage you to refer students as you see a need. We generally expect you to be sensitive to students and supportive of them and their

personal issues without becoming overly involved in their personal lives. Most classroom teachers are not trained counselors. While we want you to be a receptive ear to students, we also expect you to know your own limits and to refer immediately students who come to you with concerns about drug or alcohol use of their own or in their family, who come to you with concerns about pregnancy or sexual matters, or who express a desire to injure themselves or others.

**Special Education/Section 504 Program:** Classroom teachers and other professionals can refer students, based on the teacher's academic or behavioral observations or concerns, for assessment to determine if they have a disability that makes them eligible for special education or related services. However, you cannot suggest any particular diagnosis to parents or recommend to them that a child use any psychotropic drug. We will provide training opportunities for classroom teachers and other professionals in knowing when to refer students and in working with students with disabilities in the regular classroom.

If you are a teacher for a student with disabilities, you may be required to attend Admission, Review, and Dismissal committee meetings and participate in reviewing or planning the child's Individualized Educational Program. These meetings may occur during your conference period because they are meetings to plan for a student's instruction, and you must attend if scheduled.

Even if you are not a member of the ARD committee, you must follow the IEP for any student with disabilities in your classroom and make sure that you are making any and all the modifications to instruction or the instructional setting that are called for in the IEP. Noninstructional staff must also comply with any administrative directives for handling or working with student with disabilities.

**Student Attendance Accounting:** We rely on accurate student attendance accounting for state funding and for determining one of the school's ratings under the Student Achievement Indicator System. You must complete daily attendance records for each class. Students will be tardy if they are not in the classroom when the bell sounds.

Accurate record keeping is also necessary because of the attendance for credit law, which requires that students be present for 90% of the days class is taught in order to get credit for the class. The campus attendance committee ultimately determines whether credit will be granted for a student with excessive absences. You may be called on to serve as a member of the attendance committee.

**Curriculum/Instruction:** Teachers must teach the curriculum approved by the board of trustees, which is focused on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills adopted by the State Board of Education. The TEKS are aligned with the statewide assessment program for all students, which is administered annually at most grade levels. As you are all aware, campus and district ratings rely to a great extent on student achievement as demonstrated through success on the state assessments. For all these reasons, each teacher must devote his or her best energy and efforts to delivering the required knowledge and skills to their students and making sure that students are learning.

Teachers do not have the latitude to select their own instructional materials. You must use the district-provided textbooks and curriculum and must obtain prior approval from your principal to use any other materials in your classroom.

We have included in the Appendix to the Handbook, board policy EFE (LEGAL), (LOCAL), and (EXHIBIT) regarding federal copyright limitations on the use of copied materials in the classroom. Any copying you do for your classes must conform to the fair use guidelines in the EFE (EXHIBIT).

We encourage teachers to be creative in how they impart the essential skills and knowledge but you must obtain prior approval from your principal to conduct any special activity in the classroom that is not covered in the curriculum guide for your subject or grade level.

**Lesson Plans:** All teachers must prepare lesson plans for each subject or class each week. These plans must be submitted to the campus principal upon his/her instructions. We will provide the format for lesson plans, which must indicate the plan of instruction for each day/week in sufficient detail that a substitute teacher could follow through and deliver the scheduled lessons. Lesson plans must also indicate plans and techniques for differentiating instruction and implementing modifications for students with disabilities as required by IEPs or Section 504 plans.

**Grade Books/Grading Records:** You must maintain timely recorded grades for students in the computerized grade recording and reporting system. Grades must be submitted on GradeSpeed no later than 5 days upon receipt. Any grade books we provide must be turned in to the principal at the end of each school year.

**Grading Guidelines:** You may establish grading standards and guidelines for your classroom, provided they are consistent with the campus and district standards described below. You must communicate your individual requirements and the campus requirements to students at the beginning of each school year or semester.

You cannot use grade reductions to discipline students for classroom misconduct, but you can give zeros or grade reductions for work that is not turned in, work that is late, work that does not fulfill the assignment, or for cheating or plagiarism.

**Make-up Work** Students who have been absent for illness or any other reason have the responsibility to contact you about any make-up work they need to do. Students have the number of days they have been absent to complete and turn in make-up work. That is, a student who misses two days has two days plus one after returning to class to complete the make-up assignment. Make-up assignments should be the same or essentially equal to the assignment or work assigned for students who were present.

**Homework** We expect teachers to use homework to reinforce skills and concepts introduced in the classroom. You cannot use homework assignments to introduce new concepts or information other than a reading assignment to prepare for instruction the following day. Grade level teams should coordinate their homework assignments so that students are not overburdened; however, as students advance in grade level, the amount of time reasonably devoted to

homework each evening will increase. In making homework assignments, keep in mind the balance for students of school, play, and family.

**Field Trips:** Well-planned and well-executed field trips are a valuable instructional experience for students of all ages. If you or your grade level or team want to take students on a field trip, you must first get principal approval for the activity and the scheduled date, as well as submit a request for necessary transportation. A proposal for a field trip must be coordinated with the TEKS for the course, define the curricular objectives for the trip, and fit in with the current instructional unit.

Field trips will always be taken on school transportation and never by private passenger vehicles. Students must submit signed parent permission slips before the trip. We encourage you to enlist the help of parents to assist in supervising students on the field trip.

If you will have certain criteria for students to participate in the field trip, you must communicate those well in advance to students and parents. Any criteria should be designed to maximize student participation. Criteria for participation must not be designed in such a way that all students who are ineligible can be readily identified as students who are failing the class. You must plan an alternate instructional activity for students who are not eligible to participate in the field trip.

**Using Film/Movies in Class:** Movies can be used effectively for instruction in many courses, but must never be used in the classroom as a reward or for entertainment.

Before you show a movie to a class, however, you must discuss the activity with your principal, including how the movie is related to the TEKS for the class or subject. Movies should always be age-appropriate for the students in the class. As a general rule, R-rated movies will not be used in the classroom. However, with principal permission, specific notice to parents, and specific parent permission, R-rated films may be shown to high school students when they are determined to be of significant instructional value. You must plan an alternate instructional activity that will accomplish the same instructional goals for students who do not have parent permission to view the film.

**Tutorials:** We provide tutorial sessions in core curriculum areas of Math, Science, English and Social Studies. Tutorial sessions are scheduled before and after school. Students who have grades below 70 in any of these subjects must attend tutorials in the following grading period.

**Textbooks/Instructional Technology:** At the beginning the school year or semester, you will assist in the distribution of state-adopted textbooks or instructional technology to students in your classes. You will oversee and ensure that all state-adopted textbooks are covered to protect them and ensure they are usable for the life of the adoption cycle. At the end of the year or semester, you are responsible for accounting for the return of textbooks or instructional technology issued to your students. However, we will not require you to pay for any textbooks or instructional technology that your students steal, misplace, or do not return.

Some students will not be issued textbooks if they did not properly return books issued in the previous year. You will have a few classroom copies of the textbook for those students to use in class, but they cannot take the books home or to their lockers.

**Fund-Raising:** You cannot use instructional time to administer or facilitate fund-raising efforts of student or other organizations.

If you are the sponsor of a student group or organization that wishes to conduct a fund-raising campaign, you must get prior approval from the principal for the activity. Elementary students will not be allowed to conduct any fund-raising activities that involve door-to-door solicitation; however, with adult supervision at all times, secondary students may conduct door-to-door fund-raising campaigns.

As a sponsor of a student group or organization, you are personally responsible for accounting for all funds raised or collected by students in your group. These amounts must be deposited with the principal daily for safekeeping and deposited to the activity account for the group or organization.

You cannot keep funds collected from students for any purpose in your classroom, in your vehicle or at your home. Your failure to follow established procedures related to depositing, handling, and accounting for the proceeds from fund-raising activities or any other monies associated with student activities or organizations may affect your employment.

**Extracurricular /UIL Sponsorships:** Your principal can assign extra duties related to sponsorship of extracurricular student groups and UIL academic activities. Some of these assignments may have additional stipends according to the schedule approved by the board of trustees; some may not. A teacher's primary responsibility is **always** the delivery of the required curriculum to students in your classes.

#### References:

FSISD Board Policy Manual

<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/186902/>

Educators' Code of Ethics

<http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/default.asp>

District Forms

<http://www.fsisd.net/Links.shtml>

Safety Standards

<https://www.cas-services.com/Manuals/Safety%20Manual.pdf>