

# Gause ISD Employee Handbook 2017-2018



**“Learning Is Fun”**

*Gause ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, age, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, employment, and programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Brad Jones, Superintendent, has been designated to coordinate compliance with these requirements. P.O. Box 38, 400 College Street, Gause Texas 77857 Phone: 979-279-5891 Fax: 979-279-5142, E-mail: [brad.jones@gauseisd.net](mailto:brad.jones@gauseisd.net).*

*Approved by the Gause ISD Board of Trustees August 2017  
Written in accordance with the Texas Assoc. of School Boards*



# Employee Handbook Receipt

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

*The electronic copy is located at [www.gauseisd.net](http://www.gauseisd.net) under “For Staff.”*

Please indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box below:

- I choose to receive the employee handbook in electronic format and accept responsibility for accessing it 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 book. 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 the superintendent if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign and date this receipt and forward it to Nadine Morrison.

# Introduction

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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 Brad Jones.

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

# District Information

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## Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

***Mission*** – It is our mission to educate each child to be capable to face the future with the ability to be successful in all aspects of life; academically, culturally, emotionally, morally, and physically. All students will succeed by learning to own their own learning and cultivate their curiosity. Each child will feel a sense of belonging, confidence, and safety. Students will develop their talents, be held to high standards, and be prepared for life.

### **Goals:**

#### **Goal 1: Academic Expectations**

**Objective:** All students will be expected to meet or exceed the state and federal performance standards, begin the first steps in determining their career paths, and will develop the skills necessary to compete in today's digitally connected world.

#### **Goal 2: Staff Development**

**Objective:** Expand the focus of professional development to better meet the needs of all personnel.

#### **Goal 3: Parent/Community Involvement**

**Objective:** Parents and other members of the community will be partners in the improvement of the school.

#### **Goal 4: Campus Environment**

**Objective:** An atmosphere will be provided to enhance the small, safe school atmosphere of the Gause ISD.

## Administration

Brad Jones, Superintendent

Diane Lazrine, Finance Manager

Nadine Morrison, PEIMS Coordinator, Registrar

Sondra Sheppard, Cafeteria Director

Christa Hernandez, Administrative Assistant

## **Board of Trustees**

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

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

The board of trustees is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the district's children. Board members are elected every two years and serve four-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

- Bill Jones
- Linda Hoppe
- Tammy Smith
- Dr. Henry Bonorden
- Kathy Turner
- Randy Grenwelge
- Melanie Rasco

The board usually meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm in the Superintendent's office. In the event that large attendance is anticipated, the board may meet at the Library or Cafeteria. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website and the front of the school at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

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

## **Board Meeting Schedule for 2017-18**

The board usually meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm.

## **School Calendar**

The School Calendar can be found at [www.gauseisd.net](http://www.gauseisd.net)

# Employment

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## Equal Employment Opportunity

*Policies DAA, DIA*

Gause ISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, 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 for any of the reasons listed above should contact Brad Jones, Superintendent.

## Job Vacancy Announcements

*Policy DC*

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the district's website - [www.gauseisd.net](http://www.gauseisd.net) under the "For the Community" tab under "Employment".

## Employment After Retirement

*Policy DC*

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

## Contract and Noncontract Employment

*Policy DC series*

State law requires the district to employ all full-time professional employees in positions requiring a certificate from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and nurses under probationary, term, or continuing contracts. Employees in all other positions are employed at-will or by a contract that is not subject to the procedures for nonrenewal or termination under

Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. The paragraphs that follow provide a general description of the employment arrangements used by the district.

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

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

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

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

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

## **Certification and Licenses**

*Policies DBA, DF*

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or 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 Brad Jones 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 Brad Jones if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

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

*Policy CQ, DHE*

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

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact Brad Jones.

## **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 or documentation to the office.

## **Reassignments and Transfers**

*Policy DK*

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

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Superintendent's office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

## **Workload and Work Schedules**

*Policies DEA, DEAB, DK, DL*

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

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

**Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees.** Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. See *Overtime Compensation* 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 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. NCLB also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

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

## **Employee Involvement**

*Policies BQA, BQB*

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

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

# **Compensation and Benefits**

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## **Salaries, Wages, and Stipends**

*Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB*

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

All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules before the start of each school year. Classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time nurses, and full-time counselors will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the district's extra-duty pay schedule.

Employees should contact Brad Jones for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

## **Paychecks**

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

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

The schedule of pay dates for the 2016-17 school year follows:

***Paychecks are deposited on the 28<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the 28<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend, paychecks are deposited before the weekend.***

***December paychecks will be deposited on Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.***

## **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 Diane Lazrine 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; and higher education savings plans. 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 workweek 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 on Sunday and ends on Saturday.

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).
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

## **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

*Policy DEE*

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

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

*Policy CRD*

Group health insurance coverage is provided through TRS-ActiveCare, the statewide public school 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) 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 Diane Lazrine for more information.

## **Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

*Policy CRD*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for disability, dental, and life. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact Diane Lazrine 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 TASB.

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 Brad Jones and Diane Lazrine. 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 Diane Lazrine.

## **Teacher Retirement**

### *Policy DEG*

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four and one-half months are members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). Substitutes not receiving TRS service retirement benefits who work at least 90 days a year are 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 Diane Lazrine as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web ([www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)).

## Leaves and Absences

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*Policies DEC, DECA, DECB*

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

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

**Continuation of Health Insurance.** Employees on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under the 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.

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## **Personal Leave**

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

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

**Discretionary.** Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor 2 days in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor.

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

## **State Sick Leave**

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State sick leave can be used only in half-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

## **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—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 FMLA follows this general notice.

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

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

**Military Family Leave Entitlements.** 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.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered servicemember during a single 12-month period. A covered servicemember 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 servicemembers and veterans are distinct from the FMLA definition of “serious health condition”.**

**Benefits and Protections.** During FML, 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, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Use of FML 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. In order to use paid leave for FML, employees must comply with the district's normal paid leave policies.

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

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FML

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 the FMLA. If they are eligible, 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 and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FML, the employer must notify the employee.

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

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

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

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

For additional information:

1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627  
[www.wagehour.dol.gov](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 measured forward from the date an individual employee's first FML begins

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

**Combined Leave for Spouses.** Spouses who are employed by the district are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of FML to care for a parent with a serious health condition; or for

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

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

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

## **Temporary Disability Leave**

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

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

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

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

## **Workers' Compensation Benefits**

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

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

## **Assault Leave**

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

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

## **Jury Duty**

Employees will receive leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave for jury duty. Employees must present documentation of the service and shall be allowed to retain 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 personal 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 leave 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.

**Reemployment after Military Leave.** Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. 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 time specified by law to Brad Jones. 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 Diane Lazrine for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **Employee Relations and Communications**

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### **Employee Recognition and Appreciation**

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

### **District Communications**

Throughout the school year, the Gause ISD office publishes newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

### **Complaints and Grievances**

*Policy DGBA*

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

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

## **Employee Conduct and Welfare**

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### **Standards of Conduct**

#### *Policy DH*

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

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

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines 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 after the superintendent knew of the incident. See *Reports to the 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*

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.

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

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation is found at Board Policy DIA (Local).

## **Harassment of Students**

*Policies DF, 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 found in Board Policy DF (Legal): the definition of solicitation of a romantic relationship; and FFH (Local).

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

*Policies DF, DG, DH, FFG, GRA*

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Abuse is defined by 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 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 report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics.

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

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

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

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, including having all employees take Darkness to Light online Training. As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who 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, e-mail 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 technology resources are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use.

Employees are required to abide by the provisions of the 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 Wynell Meeks.

## **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 10:00p.m. and 7:00a.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 DF]
- 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 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*

Gause 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 can be found in Board Policy at DH (Local) and DI (Exhibit).

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

*Policies DH, FNCD GKA*

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 EFE*

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

## **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 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 Superintendent's office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

## **Pest Control Treatment**

*Policies CLB, DI*

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

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located on the front windows of the school. 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.

## **General Procedures**

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### **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 website and notify the following radio and television stations:

***KBTX, KRXT, KMIL, KCENTV/GAUSE APP***

## **Emergencies**

*Policies CKC, CKD*

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

## **Purchasing Procedures**

*Policy CH*

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the business department on an official district purchase order (PO) form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without a PO number. The district will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district's business office. Contact Diane Lazrine 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 office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. The form to process a change in personal information can be obtained from Nadine Morrison.

## **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
- Information that reveals whether they have family members
- Personal e-mail address

The choice to not allow public access to this information may be made at any time by submitting a written request to Nadine Morrison. 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. Brad Jones is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact Brad Jones to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

## **Termination of Employment**

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

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

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

### **Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees**

*Policies DFAA, DFAB, DFBA, DFBB, DFD, DFF, 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 nonrenewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed

during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The timelines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee. Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when the employee's certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the timelines and procedures can be found in the DF series policies that are provided to employees or are available on line.

## **Dismissal of Noncontract Employees**

*Policy DCD*

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

*Policies 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 conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor

- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of 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 that 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.

## 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

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### Equal Educational Opportunities

*Policies FB, FFH*

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students based on any of the reasons listed above should be directed to Brad Jones.

### 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 office for assistance.

## **Parent and Student Complaints**

*Policy FNG*

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

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

## **Administering Medication to Students**

*Policy FFAC*

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

## **Dietary Supplements**

*Policies DH, FFAC*

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

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

*Policy FFAC*

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

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

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

## **Student Conduct and Discipline**

*Policies in the FN series and FO series*

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

## **Student Attendance**

*Policy FEB*

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the district's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require minor students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student upon returning to school, must 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 Brad Jones. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students.

## **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.

## **Gause ISD Administrative Policies**

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### **After-school Detention**

After-school detention will be on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons, 3:15 – 4:00 p.m. Teachers may assign students to detention if the proper paperwork is sent home and **advance notice** is sent to the principal. Parents will be given at least 24 hours notice of the detention. Students may not choose the detention date.

**The after-school detention is mandatory.** If a student is assigned to Detention and does not attend, the student must make up that date and will be assigned an additional day of detention. If a student fails to attend either of the two assigned detentions, he or she will attend in-school suspension for one to three days depending on the reason for the detention assignment. **Students and parents do not have the option of changing Detention dates, but parents may call Mr. Jones to reschedule if family situations arise.**

At Gause, we make a commitment to parents to use this after-school discipline only in cases where *repetitive* inappropriate behaviors have occurred or for more serious offenses as listed in the Student Code of Conduct. We also utilize Detention for ZAP’s (Zero’s Aren’t Permitted) for unfinished school work. Work for zeros is expected to be turned in by the end of Detention. The after-school Detention will be under the supervision of the principal’s designee. The Detention begins promptly at 3:15 p.m. and students will not be admitted late. If they do not arrive by 3:15 p.m., they will be assigned to the next Detention day **and** will automatically have another day of detention added. Additionally, students must bring work to Detention. They will not be allowed to go to their lockers. Students must successfully complete Detention or will have to repeat.

### **At-Risk Students**

**Definition:** Students who have failed a grade, students who do not maintain a 70 average in each subject, students who do not do well on the TPRI in K-2, students who do not pass all of the STAAR tests, students who did not advance from one grade level to the next for one or more school years, students of limited English proficiency, students who are sexually, physically, or psychologically abused, students placed in an alternative education program, students who are on parole, probation, or deferred prosecution, or homeless students.

### **Attendance – Student 25.092**

Teachers are held responsible for student attendance and accounting. All teachers will report attendance on the computer at the beginning of each period (**not all at once at the end of the day**). Teachers will inform the principal regarding students with serious attendance issues. Teachers will list tardies in the attendance system. The TxEIS system will track changes to the attendance program (i.e. who changed information). Excused absences are counted in determining whether a student is in compliance with the attendance requirements for class credit, but attendance committees may take into account excused absences when determining whether to issue credit. Section 25.095 requires that students attend class 90 percent of the time for credit. (See also Pupil Accounting.) Teachers should keep records of attendance for backup. Paper attendance sheets will not be sent to the office. Teachers will track students who leave early during the day. Additionally, students must be checked out in the office before they leave campus. They cannot leave from the gym. All employees must also check their children out from the office.

### **Bad Weather**

The Superintendent will make decisions regarding inclement weather with regard to school closures and/or late openings. Blackboard Connect (Text, phone call, and/or email) will be used to notify employees of late starts/closures....also, KBTX, KMIL, and other sources will also have late start/school closing information.

### **Benchmarking**

Teachers will conduct benchmarks for all students at least two times per year using release STAAR tests, or other STAAR-type tests on the DMAC Assessment Software System. Progress monitoring will be utilized throughout the year using commercial-made test questions, TPRI, Star Math, Star Reading, and TMSDS. Progress Monitoring and Benchmark test dates will be sent to the principal so that he can keep the assessment calendar up-to-date. Students who do not pass the benchmarks will be assigned to mandatory tutorials for objectives failed until objectives are mastered. If a child fails more than one assessment, teachers will coordinate tutorial times. With the utilization of progress monitoring and benchmarking, the Gause student progress will be kept up-to-date in Principal's office.

### **Bus Drivers (Policy DBA)**

Bus driver credentials shall include:

1. Commercial driver's license
2. Pre-employment physical examination that reveals physical and mental capabilities to safely operate a school bus; such examinations shall be conducted annually thereafter.
3. Pre-employment driver's license check with the Texas Department of Public Safety, and a driving record acceptable according to the standards prescribed by the State Board and the Department of Public Safety.
4. A valid certificate stating that the driver is enrolled in, or has completed a driver training course in school bus safety education approved by the State Board and the Department of Public Safety.

### **Cafeteria Duty**

All teachers or Aides are assigned to morning duty in the cafeteria on a rotating basis. Teachers and Aides must follow this schedule. If you are absent from school, make sure your substitute knows to cover this assignment. If no substitute is used, contact Mr. Jones. Teachers are responsible for students during breakfast or lunch and will monitor that students have cleaned their tables and the surrounding floor areas before leaving the cafeteria. Please pay close attention to lunch times because the cafeteria staff needs trays and utensils turned in on time in order to prepare for the next group.

### **Cafeteria Policy**

Students are to maintain self discipline while in the cafeteria. They may talk quietly while they consume their breakfast or lunch without undue delay. **Teachers/Aides assigned to Lunch Duty are responsible for the conduct of their students during the lunch period.** Students shall pay for meals in advance or per day. Meal check-off will be done at point of service. **Lunchroom charges will be limited to a \$20 maximum per individual.** Student's families who maximize their charges will get one reminder when the charges get to \$18. After the maximum has been reached, the student(s) will begin to receive a Grade A meal (which may include a cheese sandwich, fruit, and milk). Extra milk or juice may be purchased for \$.35. Students who qualify for free or reduced meals that bring their lunch must pay \$.35 for milk. Free/reduced milk is provided only with the free/reduced meal and there will be no charge. There are additional charges for extra milk or juice.

The following are the meal prices:

#### **2017 - 18 Gause ISD Cafeteria Prices**

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>BREAKFAST</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>JUICE/MILK/WATER</b>
Pre-K to 8th	\$1.75	\$2.70	\$ .35
Faculty	\$2.50	\$3.75	\$ .35
Guests	\$2.50	\$3.75	\$ .35
Reduced	\$ .30	\$ .40	\$ .35
Ala-carte and Sides	varies	varies	

(Prices may change based on State changes)

Teachers will be responsible for the classroom lunch count, taking student lunch money, and reporting to the office.

### **Computers**

The computers at Gause ISD are the property of Gause ISD. Teachers must sign and accept the Gause ISD Acceptable Use of Technology Policy. Teachers will not load personal software without approval of principal nor allow family and friends to use the district's technology. Teachers will not use the district's computers for shopping or online personal chatting during the school workday. Professional communication between colleagues and parents is acceptable and

encouraged. Teachers are assigned laptops to encourage them to utilize them at home. It is strongly recommended that you do not allow members of your family to not use your laptops. Remember that you are responsible for all content found on your computer.

### **Conference Period**

All certified, professional employees have a conference period daily. This is not a free period. The conference period is to be used to prepare lessons, grade assignments, update the electronic grading program, or contact parents. Personal business is to be conducted before 7:30 a.m. or after 3:30 p.m. (See also District Policy DL.)

### **Crisis Management Plan**

All staff is responsible for knowing the requirements of the Gause ISD Crisis Management Plan. Review the Plan regularly.

### **Curriculum and Instruction Curriculum Documents**

Gause ISD will continue to align curriculum documents with the State curriculum, TEKS. Our main focus will remain on all core subjects.

### **Discipline**

#### ***Classroom***

A good disciplinarian will be firm but fair. Rules for classroom discipline should be clearly understood by the child and communicated to the parents. Classroom rules should be observed consistently and should be posted in the classroom for the students and parents to read. Rewards and consequences should be understood by students.

Teachers will review the Discipline Management Plan and Student Code of Conduct with students. Teachers must be aware of the rules and regulations in the Student Code of Conduct. Discipline procedures will follow the Discipline Management Plan and the Student Code of Conduct. Whenever possible, teacher/parent, teacher/superintendent, or teacher/student conferences should be held before a problem arises. The best way to maintain discipline is through the use of interesting and challenging classroom activities at the student's level. Busy students don't get into trouble.

#### ***Halls and Playground***

All personnel are responsible for maintaining discipline in the halls and the playground.

**Teachers will stand at the door to greet students when they enter the classroom.** Junior High teachers assigned to hall duty **MUST** report to their duty station. Personnel on playground duty are responsible for the supervision of all playground activities, arbitrating disputes, taking care of injuries, sending for help in an emergency, and getting students lined up and returning them to class in an orderly fashion. When returning from outside, students should not stop at the water fountain or go to restrooms unless under the supervision of an adult and unless given permission by the student's teacher. **Personnel monitoring students at play will go to the playground to watch the students.**

### **Doors**

Gause ISD has installed enclosed walkways throughout the district. **It is the responsibility of all faculty and staff members to inquire as to why visitors are in the building UNLESS they have a visitor badge clearly displayed.** This is for the safety and protection of students and faculty. **Emergency** exits are available in the walkways. AT NO TIME shall a teacher put a rock (or other object) in the emergency exit door to hold door open nor will they allow students, personal children, or family to enter through emergency exits. **All guests on campus will enter the school building through the front doors or cafeteria doors.**

### **Dress Code**

Professional staff members are encouraged to maintain a professional image. The district realizes that different responsibilities require different clothing needs. Male classroom teachers are encouraged to wear slacks and dress shirts (collared shirts). Female classroom teachers are encouraged to wear nice coordinated outfits. Colored dress trousers and sport shirts are allowed for both male and female staff as long as they maintain the professional image required of teachers. Female teachers shall show *no cleavage or undergarments*. Blue jeans may be worn any day provided that a Gause ISD shirt is worn. Spirit or College Day does not mean sloppy day. Jeans must be nice-looking with no holes. No overalls or leggings. With approval from the principal, some teachers set aside one day per week for “hands-on” activities which require special clothing. Please be neat. Make certain that shorts and skirts are of the appropriate length (see student dress code). Faculty members may request exceptions for special days such as Spirit Day, Halloween, etc.

### **Drug and Alcohol Screening (Policy DBBA)**

The District shall conduct testing, in accordance with federal regulation, of commercial motor vehicle operators for use of alcohol or a controlled substance that violates law or federal regulation. These testing requirements apply to each employee in the District who operates a commercial motor vehicle and is subject to commercial driver's license requirements. Required testing includes pre-employment, post-accident, random, reasonable suspicion, and follow-up testing. The District shall not permit a driver who refuses to submit to such tests to perform or continue to perform safety-sensitive functions.

### **Duty-Free Lunch**

Each classroom teacher or full-time certified librarian is entitled to at least a 30 minute lunch period free from all duties and responsibilities connected with the instruction and supervision of students. All teachers are given 30 minutes during the day that are duty free, in addition to a conference period. Teachers who are on duty during lunch are expected to actively monitor students and have students clean up after they eat. (Also see Cafeteria Duty and Policy DL.)

### **Duty Schedules**

Each employee shall adhere to the time schedule adopted by the District. At-will employees clock in and out for lunch. At-will employees may not work more than a 40-hour week without written permission from the Superintendent. Workshops and other staff development will be recorded on the sign-in sheets. Absences, personal or illness, should be recorded on the blue

“Absence from Duty” forms. These sheets will be turned in during check-out at the end of the year and kept in file.

Students may be dismissed to the library at 7:35 a.m. upon request by the student to the cafeteria monitor or with a pass from the teacher. The library is open at 7:30 a.m. Students will be released by 3:15 p.m. The tardy bell in the morning will remain at 7:50 a.m. Teachers are responsible for their students until they get on the bus, parents pick them up, or they walk home. TEACHERS WILL BE IN THEIR ROOMS, READY TO WORK AT 7:30 A.M. Teachers will monitor restrooms several times during the day and after their students use the facilities.

### **Dyslexia**

**Program Definition:** Dyslexia is defined as having difficulty learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence and socio-cultural opportunities.

**Eligibility Criteria:** Students are referred for evaluation by teachers or parents to the school principal. This evaluation process includes completion of a vision and hearing screening, the Dyslexia Characteristics Checklist and the Dyslexia Screening Report. The Screening Report includes academic information, family history, learning styles checklist, and reading inventory. When the evaluation process is complete, the Dyslexia Committee will determine placement and treatment.

### **Energy Conservation**

Pretend you are paying the electric bill in your room and observe the following rules. Turn off lights when not in use, do not open windows, and adjust the heating and cooling as outlined below. Teach the children to be energy conscious.

#### ***Air Conditioning***

- AC may not be set lower than 72 degrees from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- After 4 p.m., AC must be set on 80.

#### ***Heating***

- Heating may not be set higher than 65 from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- After 4 p.m., the heat will be set at 50.

#### ***Thermostat Settings***

- Summer AC - 85; Winter Break - 50

### **Faculty Meetings**

Faculty meetings (entire teaching staff) or team meetings will be held as needed by Mr. Jones from 3:15 – 4:00 pm. All personnel will be expected to attend except for extenuating circumstances which are pre-approved by the Superintendent.

### **Failures - Student Grades**

Teachers are held accountable to report to the principal and parents regarding student failures by six weeks. The office will print a failure list by six weeks; the principal requires documentation for parent inquiries. For UIL eligibility purposes, teachers will submit a failure list to the office at the 3-week progress report period, to be compiled by office staff into one list. Excessive

failures for six weeks or on semester exams will be examined, discussed, monitored and documented in personnel folders.

### **FERPA – Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act**

Teachers are held accountable, personally and professionally, for FERPA. This act allows parents access to student records and requires that districts provide all information requested by parents. Do not send text messages or e-mails that are inappropriate because they are subject to FERPA disclosures. FERPA does not allow teachers to discuss any issues (good or bad) regarding a student to anyone except a parent or legal guardian.

### **Field Trips**

***Field trips must be approved by the superintendent for a field trip.*** The trip shall align with classroom objectives. The classroom teacher shall inform the cafeteria at least *7 days in advance* of field trips. All field trips should be scheduled so as not to interfere with the National School Lunch Program or FMNV.

### **Financial Planning**

Under new IRS rules and teacher compensation requirements, all staff must be informed about financial planning opportunities. This planning will assist teachers as they make plans for retirement and plans should supplement TRS pension compensation. Teachers must sign-in to indicate that they have been informed.

### **Food in Classroom**

Teachers shall not provide nor allow food in the classrooms that do not meet Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV). FMNV free days, according to the school calendar, are at Halloween, Christmas, and Easter.

### **Gifted and Talented (GT)**

***Program Definition:*** Students served in the Gifted and Talented program (1) show remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to other of the same age, experience or environment, (2) exhibit high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area, (3) possess an unusual capacity for leadership, or (4) excel in a specific subject area.

***Instructional Delivery Design:*** GT students will participate in a regular classroom setting program taught by certified advanced academic teachers who modify the four core subject areas to meet the needs of the advanced academic student.

### **Grading System**

Gause ISD has joined with ESC VI for the grading/attendance/parent portal program. Assignments shall be listed in the system no later than each Monday morning of the week when assignments occur. Grades must be entered in the computer no later than each Monday morning of the following week. (This is a reminder to effectively use your conference periods.) Due to the Parent Portal portion of the grading system, parents will be able to monitor their child's progress. You will also be allowed to post notices to parents such as conference requested or notice about an upcoming major project. Teachers will effectively utilize the system so as to

keep parents informed under the guidelines and provisions set forth by ESSA. Keep grades and assignments up-to-date.

Per six weeks, teachers must record a minimum of 12 grades. At the 3 week mark for progress reports, teachers should have approximately 6 grades.

Policy EIA (Local) states that the district shall record a 50 in the permanent cumulative record for any average numerical grade that is lower than a 50. Each semester stands alone.

### **Gum**

Gum is not allowed at Gause ISD for students or faculty.

### **Hall Duty**

Teachers are expected to meet their students at the door of the classroom. This sets a tone of respect in the classroom and also allows teachers to monitor hall activities. Also, teachers who are assigned specific hall duty times must report to their assigned location at the designated time.

### **Highly Qualified Teachers**

Gause ISD makes every effort to only hire teachers who are Highly Qualified. In the event a teacher is not Highly Qualified, the District will reimburse a teacher for the cost of the test once passed, but does not provide for applying the certification to their certificate.

### **Homework**

Homework will be meaningful independent practice. The child must know how to do it before he/she leaves school. The teacher may decide how much homework to assign and the duration of it. For late homework assignments, the grade penalty is as follows: One day late – 15 points deducted; two days late – 30 points deducted; three days late – the highest grade of 50 can be recorded. Homework is not accepted after three days, excluding excused absences or extenuating circumstances determined by the teacher.

### **Instructional Delivery Design**

Special Services students should receive a modified curriculum based on his/her IEP and ARD Committee recommendations. The special education teacher and regular classroom teacher will be responsible for designing, coordinating, and keeping on file the individual student's IEP.

### **Lesson Plans**

Lesson plans are to be completed on a weekly basis either electronically submitted to the principal or placed in Lesson Plan box in teacher lounge prior to implementation. Lesson plans are due into box in teacher's lounge each Monday morning for the week in which the assignments are given. Lesson plans, after the fact, are not acceptable. It is certainly permissible to update a previous week's plan if the lesson had to be changed/extended/re-taught due to reasonable circumstances. Plans should be written so that a substitute can understand what is to be done. Lesson plans are to be left at school just case the teacher is unable to attend school. If an unplanned substitute must be used, Ms. Morrison will print out the lesson plan submitted for that

week. If codes are used in the lesson plan, have an explanation of the codes available for the substitute. Be specific about the assignments. The disposition of the written assignment shall be clearly explained.

### **Manners**

As part of the educational process, teachers will stress the importance of manners and etiquette to all students.

### **Medical**

Students should go to the office for medical reasons with a note from the teacher. Students who take medicine on a regular basis may go to the office with permission from the teacher. If a child sustains an injury in the classroom, **the parent must be called**, even if the child remains at school.

### **Professionalism**

All employees should reflect the highest standards of professionalism. Adults are the standard bearers for students. Professionalism should be reflected in communication, dress, mannerisms, ethics, and conducting school business on a daily basis. Each employee should practice and adhere to the principles of the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators. See Page 28 - 30. This is a T-Tess domain.

### **Progress Reports**

Progress reports for grades below 75 will be sent to parents following the third week of each six weeks. The cumulative report will be printed from the office. Individual progress reports (75 and below) will be given out by the classroom teacher and returned to the classroom teacher. Progress reports will go out on Mondays (see adopted school calendar). Per six weeks, teachers must record a minimum of 12 grades. At the 3 week mark for progress reports, teachers should have approximately 6 grades.

### **Promotion, Retention, and Placement Procedures**

**Promotion:** EIE (Legal) A student may be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the subject matter of the course or grade level. Education Code 28.021 (a). A student who does not demonstrate proficiency may advance to the next grade only if the student's grade placement committee determines by unanimous decision, in accordance with the standards for promotion established by the Board, that the student is likely to perform at grade level at the end of the next year given additional accelerated instruction.

All averages will be rounded off by point 5 (.5) and above will be rounded up to the next whole number, point 4 (.4) and below will be rounded down to the next whole number. ***The report cards will reflect whole numbers and no decimals as shown below. Each semester stands alone for grading purposes. Final grade for a class is based on semester 1 and semester 2 averaged together. Second semester grades MAY bring up first semester grades; however, first semester grades MAY NOT bring up second semester grades.***

Example: 87.6 = 88, 75.8 = 76, 91.3 = 91, 62.2 = 62

### ***Retention and Placement:***

Grades 1-8: In grades 1-8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall cumulative average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (TEKS) for **all** subject areas **and** a grade of 70 or above in language arts **and** mathematics.

A student must attend at least 90% of the time to be promoted. Exceptions are considered on an individual basis and are primarily for medical, family emergency, or those out of the control of the parents. (Section A of the Rules Adopted by SBOE, March 1991- Alternative to Social Promotion) provides that with parental consent, a six-year old student who is determined by the school not to be developmentally ready for the first grade may be assigned to a grade deemed appropriate by the school. Such a placement is considered retention.

**Teachers (not the Principal) will keep the parents informed about the likelihood of retention as early as the end of the first semester. Every effort through tutorials and other assistance practices should be made to help the child to pass.**

### **Pupil Accounting**

Attendance is to be taken each period. Students who exceed 10% unexcused absences each semester must go before the Attendance Committee. Extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Attendance Committee. *It is the responsibility of the teacher* to inform the superintendent of any student whose absenteeism might jeopardize his/her chances for promotion to the next grade. Students who check out from school early on a regular basis must be documented in official attendance accounting.

Compulsory Attendance – Compulsory attendance applies to students who are at least six years old as of September 1 of the applicable year. The law requires a student to attend public school until the student’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, unless the student is exempt under 25.086. (Also see Attendance.)

### **Report Cards**

Report cards will be sent home on the first Wednesday following the end of the six-weeks grading period. Report cards will be sent home by student. See the approved current School Calendar for dates. The Texas Connect Web-based grading system will generate report cards to be sent home with students for grade reporting and attendance.

### **Grading Scale**

90-100 = A    80 -89 = B    75-79 = C    70 - 74= D    69 and-Below = F

### **Reporting to Parents**

***Weekly Papers and Teacher Note:*** Parents have a better idea of how their child is progressing in school if they can see the papers on a weekly basis. It is suggested that each teacher choose a

convenient date each week to send papers home with students and notify the parents what date to expect them. Also, keep Parent Portal updated. Notes with positive statements about the child's progress or suggestions about how the parent might help will enhance parent/teacher relations.

### **Response to Intervention (RTI) and the Student Intervention Teams (SIT) Process**

There are 5 components of RTI:

1. All students receive high-quality core content area instruction.
2. All students are screened to identify those who are making adequate grade level progress, and those who are falling behind and at risk due to learning difficulties.
3. All at-risk students are provided with immediate, research-based intervention instruction.
4. At-risk students' progress is monitored frequently to ensure the intervention is meeting their needs.
5. Professional development is provided to educators to enhance the instruction and intervention they provide.

Student Intervention Teams (SITs) will be established for each at-risk child to collaborate the best instructional plans for that child. The SIT teams will include the teachers involved with core content and RTI interventions.

### **Re-teaching Procedures**

Section 75.170(a) of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) requires of a school an acceptable procedure to re-teach non-mastering students. ***Definition and Explanation:*** Re-teaching is another presentation of content, usually to provide an additional opportunity for a student to learn. Implementation of the district procedure for re-teaching does not have to be detailed or prescriptive. It may be as simple as repeating the concept. If the student still does not understand the concept, the teacher might use different material or modalities to present the concept again. Re-teaching may vary from subject to subject or from class to class, even from student to student. If the initial instruction was primarily visual, the re-teach activity should incorporate another learning style. If the teacher used the deductive approach initially, the re-teach activity might use the inductive approach. In this way, the student will gain a new perspective on the task. Re-teaching is an integral part of the lesson cycle and may occur in many different situations. Teachers should plan for re-teaching at the same time they are planning initial instruction. Planning for re-teaching may or may not be written and should not require excessive time or documentation.

If initial re-teaching efforts are unsuccessful, the more complex process of remediation may be necessary. Remediation implies analysis of the learning task and further diagnosis of a student's needs, including the identification of deficient prerequisite skills. Remediation may be offered in many different situations.

***Note: Re-teaching does not mean allowing the student to re-do work until they receive a 70. This causes inflated grades that do not accurately reflect the student's ability.***

### **Section 504 Program**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law passed by the United States Congress with the purpose of prohibiting discrimination against disabled persons who may participate in, or receive

benefits from, programs receiving federal financial assistance. Section 504 ensures that eligible disabled students are provided with educational benefits and opportunities equal to those provided to non-disabled students. The District has a duty to identify, refer, evaluate and if eligible provide a free, appropriate public education to disabled students. Every teacher who has a Section 504 student will receive an Individual Student Accommodation Plan. The modifications of this plan are to be implemented into your classroom. If you should have any questions concerning Section 504 or Individual Student Accommodation Plans, please contact the district Section 504 coordinator, Brad Jones.

### **Semester Exams**

Semester exams are given in grades 6-8 for first semester and second semester. It is at teacher discretion to determine if exams are comprehensive. If a student is passing for the semester and the exam grade causes them to fail the semester, the student is eligible for a retest. The retest should be in an alternative format in order to give the student maximum opportunities to use different learning styles.

### **Security**

At great expense to Gause taxpayers, the district has added security measures to force all traffic flow to the front office. The walkway doors are for emergency exits only. Teachers may not loan access keys to students, family, or friends. Teachers will not place rocks or other objects in the doors to allow access after-hours. Teachers are expected to write discipline notices for any student placing rocks in the doors.

### **Special Populations/Special Services**

**Program Definition:** The purpose of the Special Education Program is to provide a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities.

**Eligibility Criteria:** Students are referred for special education assessment. Teachers will complete a referral packet provided by the Burleson-Milam Special Education Coop. Learning disabled students demonstrate a severe discrepancy between what he/she is intellectually capable of and what is currently being accomplished. Mentally disabled students must have an IQ of less than 70 as identified by BMSS certified staff. Response to Intervention (RTI) will be used before a referral is done.

### **Staff Parking**

All school employees will park in the parking lot in the back of the school or next to kinder building. Front spaces are reserved for parents and guests.

### **State Compensatory Education (SCE)**

**Program Definition:** State Compensatory Education is designed to improve and enhance the regular education program so those identified students who are at-risk or educationally disadvantaged can succeed. **Eligibility Criteria:** Students in K-8 identified as at-risk include those who did not perform satisfactorily on TPRI or the Reading Assessment K-2, are limited English proficient, do not maintain an average of 70 in the core subjects (language arts, math, science, social studies), failed a grade, or have been sexually, physically, or psychologically

abused. **Instructional Delivery Design:** The goal of SCE is to provide lower student/teacher ratio, attain grade level proficiency, and pass STAAR. Smaller classes at the lower grade levels are one of the main benefits at Gause ISD to enhance student performance. Individualized instruction will be utilized to assist students. Instruction will be modified to assist at-risk, identified 504 students, or disadvantaged students.

### **Student Awards**

Grades for student awards are averaged for all subjects, not just core. Perfect attendance awards are given for NO ABSENCES in any class for junior high and for 10 a.m. attendance reporting in PK-Grade 5. Merit awards for attendance may be given for students who have one absence or an extenuating circumstance, based on teacher discretion. Students may not be given STAAR Commended Performance Awards; however, they may be given “Achievement Awards”. Valedictorian and Salutatorian awards are based on all subjects and are calculated from grades 6, 7, and through the fifth six weeks of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. The Valedictorian and Salutatorian must attend grades 6-8 at Gause Junior High in order to be considered for these awards.

### **Telephone Use**

District telephones are for teachers to conduct school business and contact parents. Please keep personal calls to a minimum and be courteous when other teachers are waiting to use the telephone. District phones are NOT for student use unless an emergency. **Students will be allowed to use the District phones ONLY if they have a teacher note or if they receive permission from the office staff.**

### **Textbooks**

Teachers shall communicate with the office concerning checking out textbooks from the bookroom. When checking textbooks out or in, teachers should use the checkout process. Students who lose textbooks will be required to pay for them before receiving a report card during any six weeks or at the end of the year. It is the teacher's responsibility to notify the office if a student has lost a textbook.

### **Title I School-wide**

Title I, Part A - Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Education Agencies (LEA) provides supplemental funding to state and LEAs for resources to help schools with high concentrations of students from low-income families provide a high-quality education that will enable all children to meet the state's student performance standards. Title I, Part A supports schools in implementing either a school-wide program or a targeted assistance program. These programs must use effective methods and instructional strategies that are grounded in scientifically based research.

### **Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS)**

**Program Definition:** This program establishes and maintains a program in drug abuse prevention and early intervention. Special programs are presented to prevent drug abuse among all students. **Instructional Delivery Design:** Teachers will include Drug and Safe School Curriculum within instruction.

## **UIL**

Gause ISD will participate in academic UIL. All teachers are expected to coach students and prepare them for competition. Teachers are paid to coach UIL students. You may use tutorial time to coach UIL if your team can work out the tutoring needs. Teachers are paid \$50 per UIL event and must present documentation in the office that you have worked with your team/team members for at least 2 hours in order to receive compensation.

## **Workday Hours**

Classroom teachers will be in their classrooms, ready to work, each school day at 7:30 a.m. and may leave at 3:30 p.m. Leaving early or arrive late will be kept to a minimum. On Fridays, once classes are dismissed and all duties are performed, teachers and staff may leave earlier than 3:30 pm.

## **Parent Involvement Policy Statement of Purpose**

Gause ISD believes every child should have the opportunity to attain his/her full potential. Therefore, Gause ISD will maximize its resources to the extent reasonable and available to enable each child to have the opportunity to become a successful learner. A key resource is its people: administrators, teachers, school staff, parents, and community members. We will work together to establish effective partnerships; together everyone achieves more. School and home must work together to realize higher student achievement. Ongoing, two-way, meaningful communication will occur to facilitate mutual understanding and to stimulate student success.

Gause ISD will provide to all parents the grade level goals for its students. Gause ISD will also publish the STAAR testing schedule and assessment goals. Those students that need extra assistance will have access to programs that will give them opportunity to meet these goals.

Gause ISD will make every effort to include parents in the development, evaluation, and revision of the Parental Involvement Policy as it pertains to the Title I Program. The school-parent compact will describe the responsibilities of key stakeholders and useful channels of communication. The goal of our parental involvement program is student success.

The District Education Improvement Committee which consists of 2 parents, 1 community member, 1 business representative, 4 teachers (1 representing special populations), and 1 superintendent will develop and revise Gause ISD's Parental Involvement Policy.

Gause ISD will inform parents at the beginning of the school of the Title I program which includes the Gause Parent Involvement Policy, and opportunities for parental participation. This information will be distributed to all parents in either English or Spanish with the distribution of the first six-week report cards.

There will be an annual meeting at the beginning of the year for parents. Translators will be present at each meeting if needed. Parents will be informed about the meeting in the newspaper and notices sent home with students.

Since the goal of Gause ISD is student success, the expectations for school performance, individual student assessments, and grade level curriculum will be provided in a format parents can understand.

Parents will be advised that the effectiveness of the Parent Involvement program will be evaluated annually and the policy will be revised to meet the needs of the students, school, parents, and community.

Gause ISD values the partnership of the parents in their children's education. There are many ways parents can make significant contributions to student success both at home and by volunteering at the school. Student achievement is the result of effective home-school-community partnerships.

Annually, Gause ISD will assess the needs of the parents and children in the school community using a variety of tools including a survey or questionnaire. The findings will be used to revise the district programs to meet the current needs. Workshops or other training will be made available to educators and parents to address these needs. Parents will be notified about training opportunities.

Gause ISD will communicate with parents on a regular basis. Classroom teachers will distribute letters weekly in the student's folders. Important information will be provided in the student handbook, the school-parent compact, and on the district website. Frequent notices about student performance will be sent home with children, or provided by phone calls, emails, conferences, and/or in-home visits. In so far as possible all communication will be provided in a language and format the parents can understand. Parents are encouraged to contact the school or the child's teacher when questions or problems arise.

Gause ISD will work with its District Education Improvement Committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the parental involvement program. Surveys, classroom observation, assessment data, and other resources will be used to determine the needs and develop revised strategies for student success. Parental input will be sought. Revisions to the Parental Involvement Policy as it pertains to the Title I Program will be communicated to the parents.

Gause ISD is committed to the success of students. We will work together with parents to monitor the effectiveness of our parental involvement program as related to the Title I and to provide excellence in education. This policy will be promoted by the administrators and other school staff as we seek active participation with our parents.

## **Burleson-Milam Special Services**

Buckholts, Caldwell, Cameron, Gause, Milano, Rockdale,  
Somerville, Snook, Thorndale

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

1. Two Confidentiality Laws:
  - a. FERPA-Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
    - Passes in 1974, amended in 1996
    - Applies to all schools that receive money from the US Dept of Education
    - Also called the "Buckley Amendment"
  - b. IDEA-Individuals With Disabilities Education Act
    - Passed in 1975, reauthorized 2004

- Applies to all schools that receive money to serve students with disabilities
  - Formerly the Education of the Handicapped Act
2. Confidentiality in Practice:
- a. Awareness of confidentiality laws and requirements
  - b. Complying with procedures regarding written educational records
  - c. Being sensitive to violations of confidentiality in verbal exchanges with others
  - d. Confidentiality May Be Violated:
    - When staff discusses a child in inappropriate places or situations
    - When staff repeats gossip or rumors about a child or his family
3. Gossip vs... Professional Sharing of Information: When talking to a colleague about a student or him family, apply these four tests to see if the discussion may be violating the student's confidentiality rights.
- a. **What** is discussed:
    - If the discussion involves directory information (name, address, etc.) these is no problem unless the parent has refused to have this information released.
    - If the discussion involves other personally identifiable information that is confidential (disability, family date, etc.), the parties should be sure that legitimate educational interest is involved
    - If the discussion involves information that is rumor, opinion, or hearsay, chances are that confidentiality will be in question, and the parties have moved from professionalism to gossip
  - b. **Where** the discussion takes place
    - If the discussion occurs in a private place (such as a teacher's empty room, **empty** teachers' lounge), there is no problem with confidentiality
    - If the discussion occurs in a public place (such as the playground, the halls, a busy teacher's lounge, the supermarket), there is a good chance that confidentiality could be violated.
  - c. **Who** is Listening
    - If the parties to the discussion are school officials with legitimate educational interest there is no problem with confidentiality
    - If others are listening who have no legitimate educational interest (such as a teacher who may overhear a conversation, a nosy child on the playground, children in the hall, etc.) confidentiality may be violated
  - d. **Why** the discussion took place
    - If the parties have legitimate educational interest in a student and are sharing information that will help them work with the child, then there is no problem with confidentiality
    - If the parties are gossiping to pass time, carrying tales about a student or his family, or for other non-educational reasons, there is probably a problem with confidentiality