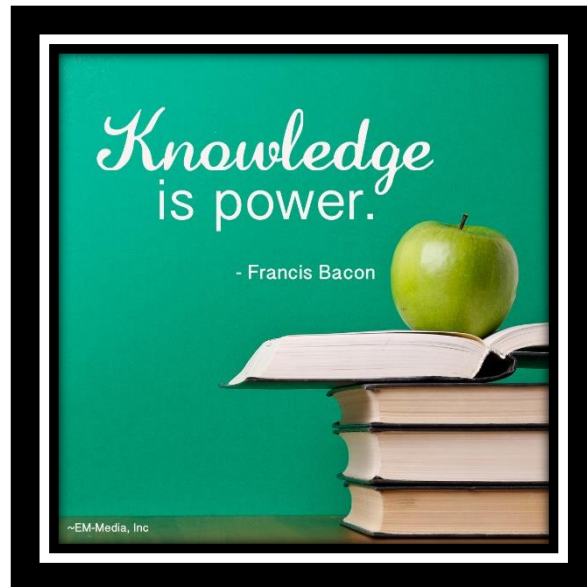


Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, Inc.

Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School

Employee Handbook **2022-2023**



VISION STATEMENT

The vision at Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School is to prepare and motivate our students for a rapidly changing world by instilling in them critical thinking skills, a global perspective, and a respect for core values of honesty, loyalty, perseverance, and compassion. Students will demonstrate success today and be prepared for tomorrow's societal and global changes.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School's staff, parents, and community are dedicated to the intellectual, personal, social, emotional and physical growth of students. Our highly qualified staff recognizes the value of professional development in order to rigorously challenge our students. Our teaching practices are both reflective and responsive to the needs of our students. Through diversified experiences, our students discover their potential, achieve readiness for fluid transition into any high school program, college/careers, and succeed in a safe and caring environment.

Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex or disability in providing education or providing access to benefit of 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; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Board of Trustees

Anna Flores - Chairperson
Mary Yolanda Ramirez - Vice Chairperson
Irma Martinez - Secretary
Elizabeth Contreras - Trustee
Elva Garcia - Trustee
Ernest Garza - Trustee
Sylvia Segovia - Trustee

Dr. Michael J. Sandroussi

Superintendent

Rosemarie Rojas

Principal

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. This employee handbook contains personnel procedures and information that establishes the standard for high performance by all Dr. M.L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School staff. This document is considered an employee guide and not a contractual commitment.

This employee policy manual and all subsequent official revisions shall constitute the official Personnel Policies of the Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, Inc., and the DMLGG Board of Trustees here-in- after referred to as the School District Board of Trustees. This employee handbook is reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees. The Superintendent of Schools will notify the Board of Trustees concerning statements that may be in conflict with School District policies. The Board of Trustees will decide on the reconciliation of such conflicts. Pamphlets and policy booklets approved by the Superintendent to manage and administer individual programs are regarded as an extension of this Handbook. Any revisions, additions, deletions, or changes of the individual program's manual must be approved in writing by the Superintendent.

For the administration of the program, the School Board of Trustees will engage the services of a Superintendent. The Superintendent will have the authority to recruit, hire, dismiss, and promote personnel for the District administration and programmatic staff. The Superintendent will be responsible for the implementation of the personnel policies and for the development of personnel procedures consistent with the intent of these policies and the needs for the programs operated by the District. The Superintendent will accomplish the above through the training and full involvement of the staff selected to work in the specific programs.

The Campus Principal will monitor staff for compliance with personnel policies and procedures, job descriptions, and overall responsibilities of the positions. The Superintendent together with the Campus Principal and staff are responsible for creating positive relationships in the School

District in the community and any other place an opportunity presents itself. The Superintendent is the only spokesperson for the District without precluding any board member but excluding all other staff the School District may have under employment.

This organization expects staff members to serve the public in the best possible manner and to execute the responsibilities and duties of their position to the best of his/her abilities. Each staff member represents the School District in the community. The objective is always to increase the School District's good reputation as an organization that provides the best possible services to the community and surrounding areas.

This handbook is not a contract, nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of noncontract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide 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 confer with their supervisor or the appropriate district officer. This handbook is the property of the district and must be returned during end of year check out or at the time of employment termination.

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Texas Public Education System is to ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their full potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities in our state and nation. That mission is grounded on the conviction that a general diffusion of knowledge is essential for the welfare of Texas citizens. It is further grounded on the conviction that a successful public education system is directly related to a strong, dedicated, and supportive family and that parental involvement in the school is essential for the maximum educational achievement of a child. The objectives of public education are:

- Parents will be full partners with educators in the education of their children.
- Students will be encouraged and challenged to meet their full educational potential.
- Through enhanced dropout prevention efforts, all students will remain in school until they obtain a diploma.
- A well-balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students.
- Qualified and highly effective personnel will be recruited, developed, and retained.
- Texas students will demonstrate exemplary performance in comparison to national and international standards.
- School campus will remain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning.
- Educators will keep abreast of the development of creative and innovative techniques in instruction and administration using those techniques as appropriate to improve student learning. Technology will be implemented and used to increase the effectiveness of student learning, remote learning, instructional management, staff development, and administration. The academic goals of public education are to serve as a foundation for a well-balanced and appropriate education. The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in:

The Reading and Writing of the English language.

The understanding of Science.

The understanding of Mathematics.

The understanding of Social Studies.

Board of Trustees and Administration

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, annual budget, employment of the Superintendent and other professional staff, and facilities. The board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal law and regulations. The Board usually meets the third Monday of each month at 5:30 P.M in the district Board Room. Special meetings may be called when necessary.

Board of Trustees:

Anna Flores – Chairperson
Maria Yolanda Ramirez - Vice Chairperson
Irma Meru Martinez - Secretary
Elizabeth Contreras - Trustee
Elva Garcia - Trustee
Ernest Garza -Trustee
Laura Gonzalez - Trustee
Sylvia Segovia- Trustee

Administration:

Dr. Michael J. Sandroussi, Superintendent
Rosemarie Rojas, Principal
David Riggs, Finance Director
Anita Hinojosa, Federal Grants Director
Goldie Wooten, Special Education Director

- **Americans With Disabilities Act**

Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex or disability in providing education or providing access to benefit of 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; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is the responsibility of the employee to inform the employer, Dr. M.L.Garza-Gonzalez Charter School Administration/Human Resources Office if he/she is covered by the ADA guidelines upon being hired.

- **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, Inc. does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities. Employees with questions or concerns relating to discrimination on any of the basis listed above should contact the School District Superintendent at 361-881-9988.

- **Drug Free Work Place**

The Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, Inc. / DMLGG Charter School are committed to maintaining a drug-free environment. The School District prohibits the unlawful manufactured, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of controlled substances, illegal drugs, inhalants, and alcohol in the workplace. The School District shall establish a drug-free awareness program to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, the School District's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace, any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance abuse programs, and the penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violation.

- **Tobacco Policy**

The Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, Inc. /DMLGG is a tobacco-free environment. Neither employees nor visitors shall use tobacco products on the premises, including parking area, of any school facility. Employees shall not use tobacco products when working with families, regardless of the location.

- **Copeland Act**

The Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, Inc. /DMLGG Charter School complies with the provisions of the Copeland Act that makes it a criminal offense for any person to induce, by any manner whatsoever, any person employed in the construction, prosecution, completion, or repair of any public building, public works, or building or work financed in whole or in part by loans or grants from the United States, to give up any part of the compensation to which he is entitled under his contract or employment.

- **Harassment**

Harassment of a coworker or student motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. A substantiated charge of harassment against a student or employee shall result in disciplinary action. The term harassment includes repeated unwelcome and offensive slurs, jokes, or other oral, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment. An employee may be placed on Administrative Leave with/without pay while an investigation by administration, law enforcement, etc. is being conducted; the employee will remain on Administrative Leave until a full investigation is performed to determine the legitimacy of an allegation made against the employee for the above said discriminatory/unlawful conduct. There is no time limit for placing an employee on Administrative Leave. The employee may be returned to his/her position only after the investigation has been fully conducted and completed and if the employee is found fully absolved of the allegation. If an employee is found to be "in violation" of the allegation, the employee will be reprimanded by being written up and may possibly be terminated immediately and the information/documentation will be placed into the employee's personnel file. Law enforcement may also

be called to assist with an investigation and depending upon the nature of the allegation, such as indecency with a minor consisting of, but not limited to, physical contact, texting, sexting, etc. charges will be filed against the employee and as required by TEA will also be reported to TEA.

EMPLOYMENT

- **Hiring Procedures**

The Superintendent of Schools is empowered by the Board of Trustees to engage all other personnel in the appropriate delivery of duties according to the standards set by the School District and the requirements of the funding sources. Recruitment and selection of personnel will be designed to provide the maximum employment opportunity for area residents and surrounding counties. The Board of Trustees, however, may reserve the right to recruit top administrative personnel through a select committee that may advertise nationally, if deemed necessary. All employment position vacancies will be advertised within the school and through other sources such as the Texas Workforce Commission, Region 2 Education Service Center, school website, newspaper, radio, and/or word of mouth. Advertisements for employment positions will establish a deadline for submission of applications allowing sufficient time for interested parties to apply, contain the Statement "An Equal Opportunity Employer" and provide a contact name, address and phone number for further information.

Recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of talented and capable employees are very important to the success and long-term viability of the School District. When a vacancy occurs, the Superintendent will authorize the appropriate staff to initiate the hiring process. When a school administrator has a need for personnel, he or she must notify and submit a Request for Personnel Form in writing to the Superintendent for approval. All positions are available for a limited period of time and depend on availability of funds. Qualifications, experience, education, the School District's salary scales and budgetary considerations determine salaries. In order to allow for proper payroll processing, the recommended effective date of hire should be no less than four working days before the end of a pay period. The Superintendent reviews the recommendation and may discuss it with the person making the recommendation. It is then approved, revised or denied. When approved, the applicant(s) is notified that they have been hired and are provided a report to work date. Once hired, the new employee must complete all necessary paperwork for personnel and payroll records, i.e., W-4, I-9, Personnel Information Sheet, etc. The Superintendent shall approve all terms, conditions and recommendations for employment. School administrators must refrain from making verbal or written commitment of employment terms until they have been discussed with and/or approved by the Superintendent.

Employment shall be at-will unless a term of employment is expressly stated in a written contract. At-will employment means that an employee may be terminated with or without cause, with or without prior notice, at any time, for any reason. Similarly, employment is voluntarily entered into, and employees are free to resign at any time, with or without cause or notice. Individuals who fail to report for the first day of employment will be considered as never employed at the discretion of the Superintendent. Status as an at-will employee may not be changed except in writing signed and approved by the Board of Trustees. Employment at-will is the sole and entire agreement between DMLGG Charter School and the employee concerning the duration of employment and the circumstances under which employment may be terminated. Except for an employment contract approved by the Board of Trustees as described above, this handbook shall supersede all prior handbooks, written documents, or oral representations issued by DMLGG Charter School, whether such documents or representations contradict the at-will nature of employment.

- **Announcement of Vacancies**

When a staff vacancy occurs, the Superintendent and or designee will post a written job notice. All positions are open to the public in order to obtain a qualified pool of applicants. Current employees may apply for any position that is open and they deem themselves to be qualified.

- **Employment Applications**

An applicant must complete and submit an employment application. Current District employees may submit a resume in lieu of an application for a current vacancy. Otherwise, resumes will not be accepted in lieu of an application unless otherwise specified. The employer relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in the employer's exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment, or if the person has been hired, immediate termination of employment will occur.

- **Employment Reference Check**

To ensure that individuals who come to work for the School District are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is our policy to check the employment references of all applicants. Only the Superintendent or his/her designee is authorized to respond to all reference check inquiries from other employers or organizations seeking credit/personnel references. Responses to such inquiries will confirm only dates of employment, salary rates, and positions held. No other employment data will be released without a written authorization and release signed by the individual who is the subject of the inquiry.

- **Confidentiality of Criminal History**

All new employees must undergo a criminal background prior to being employed. The Finance Office will provide information needed to complete the criminal history record. Information obtained by the School District may not be released or disclosed to any person, other than the individual who is the subject of the information, TEA, or SBEC (State Board for Educator Certification). The Superintendent or designee shall promptly notify SBEC in writing by filing a report with the Executive Director of SBEC within seven calendar days of the date the Superintendent obtains or has knowledge of information indicating that an applicant for or holder of a certificate issued under Chapter 21, Subchapter B, of the Education Code has a reported criminal history.

- **Criminal History Record Check**

The Superintendent will obtain from any law enforcement or criminal justice agency all criminal history information that relates to:

- A person the School District intends to employ in any capacity;
- A person who has indicated, in writing, an intention to serve as a volunteer with the School District; or
- A volunteer or employee of the School District.

Criminal history record information regarding a person who is a volunteer or employee of the School District may be obtained no more than twice each year. The School District expects to employ only persons who can perform their duties with competence and integrity. The School District's mission is to diligently work with youth, and youth must be exposed to good role models. State regulations in some of the programs may or may not require that employees have a background check. No person who has been convicted of child abuse in any form will be considered for employment in this organization. Lying on an application is considered grounds for immediate termination of employment.

- **Classes of Employees**

All employees will fall into one of the four classifications of positions established by the School District. At the time of employment, each employee will be notified in writing of their classification.

The four classifications are:

- **Regular Full-Time** employees who work a regular scheduled eight-hour day, forty-hour week, for twelve months a year.
- **Regular Part-Time** employees who work a regular scheduled time amounting to less than six hours per day and/or thirty-two hours per week.
- **Temporary Full-Time** employees who work a regularly scheduled eight-hour day, forty-hour week for a period less than twelve months a year. Provided that a temporary full-time employee who work seven or more months of any program will be considered regular full-time employees beginning the eighth month of that program and be eligible for benefits accordingly.
- **Temporary Part-Time** employees who work a regular schedule of less than eight hours per day and/or forty hours per week for less than twelve months. Employees are considered at-will employees with permanency to be considered only if funding for the specific program that employs such an employee is available to the School District.

Support employees/staff are employed at will and will be notified of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

- **Immigration Law Compliance**

The School District must verify employment eligibility, pursuant to the Immigration Reform and Control Act, and complete Form I-9 for all new hires. The School District is committed to employing only United States citizens or immigrants/aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and comply with the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, as amended. The campus administrator or designated representative verifies all documentation at the campus level signs the I-9 form and forwards it to the Finance Office. Before commencing work, newly rehired employees must also complete the form if they have not previously filed an I-9 with this organization or if their previous I-9 is more than three years old or no longer valid.

- **New Hire and Rehire Reporting**

The School District shall furnish to the Directory of New Hires (Texas Attorney General's Office) a report that contains the name, address, and Social Security number of each newly hired employee. The report shall also contain the School District name, address, and employer identification number. The School District may also provide the employee's date of hire, date of birth, expected salary or wages, and the School District's payroll address for mailing of notice to withhold child support. The School District shall report new hire information electronically to the Child Support Division of the Office of Attorney General via the employer website portal.

New hire reports are due:

- No later than 20 calendar days after the date the School District hires the employee; or
- In the case of the School District transmitting reports manually or electronically, by two monthly transmissions (if necessary) not less than 12 days nor more than 16 days apart.

- **New Hire Orientation**

Newly hired employees report to the Finance Office and the Administrator's Office on the first day of employment to complete all forms and related paperwork. The school administrator conducts the initial orientation for new employees and ensures personnel policies, District procedures and benefits are covered during the orientation process. The employee's immediate supervisor provides an orientation as to the specific requirements of the position. Orientation is documented in writing and signed by both the

employee and the supervisor. All required paperwork for payroll is completed and filed in the employee's personnel file, i.e., I-9, W-4, Personnel Information Sheet, etc. Failure to complete and submit all required paperwork may cause a delay in the employee receiving his/her first paycheck.

- **Job Descriptions**

A job description will be available for each position within the District and will be made available to each candidate for employment and for each new employee. Job descriptions will serve as guidelines for expected performance of job responsibilities and will be used to assist in performance appraisals and annual reviews.

- **First Aid and CPR Certification**

It is highly recommended that all district personnel maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Certification must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification.

- **Probationary Period of Employment**

An employee should use the probationary period after being hired or rehired to determine whether the new position meets his or her expectations. This period is used to evaluate employee capabilities, attitude and work habits. Either the District or the employee may end the employment relationship at any time during or after the initial period, with or without cause or advance notice. All new and rehired employees work on a probationary basis for the **first 90 calendar days** after their date of hire. Employees who have reasonable assurance of continued employment, after the completion of one school year and return to work for the next school year in a timely fashion, shall not be considered as being rehired for purposes of this section.

- Employees who are promoted, demoted, or transferred within the School District must complete a probationary period of the same length with each reassignment for each new position.
- If an employee is not being rehired and has already established eligibility for program benefits in another position, they shall be on probation for the position only and shall continue eligibility for all benefits, subject to the conditions and limitations of each benefit program.

Any significant absence will automatically extend the probationary period by the length of the absence. If the District determines that the designated probationary period does not allow sufficient time to thoroughly evaluate the employee, the probationary period may be extended for a specified period.

In the case of promotions, demotions, or transfers within the School District, an employee who in the sole judgment of management is not successful in his or her new position can be removed from that job at any time during the probationary period. The employee will be allowed to return to his or her former job, if it is available. Consideration may be given to assigning the employee to any other comparable available job for which the employee is qualified. Probationary period employees will assume "regular" status upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period and specified mutually agreed upon requirements and expectations. During this period, new and rehired employees are eligible only for those benefits that are required by law, such as Workers' Compensation, Social Security and TRS (if applicable). Upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period, however, employees become eligible for any other employer-provided benefits, subject to the terms and conditions of each benefit program. Please consult with the school/HR Administrator for clarification of benefit provisions.

- **Hiring of Relatives**

It is the policy of this District that relatives of persons currently employed by the organization may be hired only if they will **not** be working directly for or supervising a relative. If already employed, they cannot be transferred into such a reporting relationship. If the relative relationship is established after employment, the individuals concerned will decide who is to be transferred within 30 days. In other cases, where a conflict arises, the parties may be separated by reassignment or at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Relationships that shall be covered by this policy include:

- Relationships of Consanguinity- For the purposes of this policy, consanguinity (a blood relative up to the second degree) is defined to include son, daughter, brother, sister, father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, grandson, granddaughter, and first cousin.
- Relationships of Affinity- Relationships of affinity (marriage) up to the second degree, is defined to include spouse, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother's spouse, sister's spouse, stepson, stepdaughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandfather-in-law, grandmother-in-law, uncle by marriage, aunt by marriage, nephew's wife, niece's husband, grandson-in-law, granddaughter-in-law, spouse's first cousin.

This policy also applies to individuals who are not legally related but who reside with another employee. *The School Board of Trustees must approve any exceptions to this policy.*

- **Reassignment of Employees**

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the Superintendent when the Superintendent determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the district. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract.

- **Disciplinary Procedures**

An employee may be terminated without prior warning on the first occurrence of violations listed under the Employee Conduct and Welfare Rules. For less serious offenses, the following three-step disciplinary process can be taken when an employee violates standards, policies, or fails to perform as required and expected.

1. Conference with Supervisor (Verbal) - When an incident or problem occurs, the employee's immediate supervisor counsels with the employee. The performance deficit is defined and specific corrective actions are requested. The employee is given clear instructions for corrective action and is informed of the consequences of failing to correct the performance deficit.

2. Warning Memorandum (Written) - Failure to improve or correct deficiencies will result in a written Warning Memorandum. This memorandum will outline in writing the deficit and what must be done to bring it to standard or expectations, a time period not to exceed 60 days, and a statement of further disciplinary action, including possible termination if corrections or standards are not achieved.

3. Review and/or (Disciplinary Actions) - The employee's progress toward improvement will be reviewed on a continuous basis during this period. If the employee meets the expected standards or removes deficiencies, he/she will be taken off written warning status. Failure to meet expected standards or remove deficiencies will result in further disciplinary action, including termination.

When an offense or deficiency is of a more serious nature, the supervisor may forego Step 1 and go directly to Step 2, Warning Memorandum. In addition, an employee who successfully completes step 2

and later (within 6 months) falls to below standard expectations or violates personnel policies may be terminated without prior warning or notice.

The Superintendent must be notified by the campus supervisor or administrator in writing of all disciplinary actions, including termination. Termination of any employee for any reason will be in writing from the Superintendent and he/she will inform the Trustees of the termination. When a conference is scheduled with the employee; a letter informing the employee of termination will be given to her or him and, if appropriate, discussed with the employee. An employee who is terminated may be given severance pay at the discretion of the Superintendent.

- **Personnel File**

A personnel file will be kept on each employee. This file is regarded as confidential material and shall be treated as such. The only persons with access to such files will be the employee, in the presence of his/her immediate supervisor, the Finance Office and Superintendent. Information that shall be considered public will be the employee names, job descriptions, work locations and work schedules. Salary is considered a confidential matter and can only be disclosed at the request in writing by the employee affected by such disclosure.

- **Disciplinary Practices**

As the basic standard of justice in this District, employees are to be informed of the behavior, rules, regulations, policies, procedures and practices by which they must abide. Disciplinary action results from failure to abide by such. It will be the practice of this District to put in writing its rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and practices. All new employees will be orientated to such at the time of employment. The standards of employee conduct normally prohibit behaviors such as fighting, obscenities, use of alcoholic beverages on the premises or at any school related activity. Violation of this standard of conduct may lead to suspension or possibility immediate termination. Also, employees of the district must follow the chain of command at all times. Requests that are presented to the Superintendent and/or Board of Trustees will be redirected to an individual's immediate supervisor.

Disciplinary action will be of four types:

1. Reprimand

- Reprimands are placed in writing, signed by the employee, with a copy given to the employee, and must contain the specifics of the conduct for which the employee is being reprimanded.
- Any two reprimands in any twelve (12) month period automatically place the employee on probation. Any three reprimands in any twelve (12) month period is cause for termination.
- The employee's immediate supervisor may initiate a reprimand. The department head or project director's concurring signature is required.
- Reprimands may be appealed to the level of the Superintendent and no higher unless the Grievance Process is initiated in writing by the complainant. (See Grievance Process)

2. Probation-Disciplinary (not to be confused with performance evaluation probation)

- Probation is in writing, signed by the employee with a copy given to the employee, and must contain both:
 - The specifics of the conduct for which the employee is being placed on probation and,
 - The specific criteria which must be met for the employee to get off probation.
- Probation is for a period of not more than 90 days and may not be extended. At the end of the probationary period, the employee must be informed in writing that he/she has completed the probation satisfactorily or that he/she is being terminated.
- Any two disciplinary probations in any twelve (12) month period and/or any three such probations in any 24 month period is cause for termination.

- The employee's immediate supervisor may initiate probation. The department head or project director's concurring signature is required.
- Probations may be appealed to the superintendent and no higher.

3. Suspension

- All suspensions, whatever their nature, shall be for a period of not more than thirty (30) days for any one offense. Two suspensions within a one-year period shall be cause for automatic termination.
- An employee is subject to suspension when there exists a question regarding either:
 - His/her violation of written Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, Inc. and/or Board Policy for any of the School District's program.
 - Activity in opposition to the stated aims or goals of the School District.
- An employee on suspension is to leave work and not to report to work until instructed to do so in writing. Leave will be without pay. Employees who are suspended or terminated are absolutely forbidden from coming to the premises to talk to on-duty employees or to call on-duty employees on the telephone. Any socializing or other reasons for communicating with current employees must be done on the employee's own time and outside of the facilities where the employee is located and working.
- All suspensions must be in writing with a copy given to the employee, containing the specific charges, length of suspension, and effective date.

4. Employment Termination Policies

The end of employment with the School District will fall within one of five categories, with policies indicated for each category:

- **Resignation-** The employee freely makes a voluntary termination for any reason he/she chooses. Employees are expected to give a minimum of two weeks written notice.
- **Mutual Agreement-** A termination by mutual agreement is made by both the individual and the supervisor when both think it would be mutually beneficial to end the employment relationship. Under these circumstances, there is no termination notice period, but the supervisor must document the agreement, including the agreed upon departure date. The Superintendent must approve the documented agreement.
- **Reduction in Force-** Jobs can be eliminated due to reorganization or discontinuance of a contract, or if sufficient funds are not being generated to make a program cost effective. Any employee so affected will be given as much notice as possible.
- **Unsatisfactory Performance-** A termination for unsatisfactory job performance results from the employee's failure to complete required tasks in a timely competent manner or maintain an adequate attendance record. Prior to termination for unsatisfactory performance, the supervisor must make a reasonable effort to resolve the problem with the employee.
- **Misconduct-** Termination can result from misconduct connected with the work on the employee's part. Termination for misconduct is based on a verifiable act(s) of misconduct by an employee. Such acts include, but may not be limited to: neglect or mismanagement of a position of employment by action or inaction; refusal to do work which is reasonably expected and the employee is capable of performing; improper use or acquisition of District property; violation of a law, i.e., a felony conviction; insubordination; neglect that places in jeopardy the lives or property of others; intentional wrongdoing or malfeasance; violation of a policy or rule the employee was aware of and was adopted to ensure orderly work and the safety of employees.

Supervisors may recommend a termination due to misconduct. However, recommendations must be submitted to the Superintendent in writing and must be specific in terms of setting out the facts on which the recommendation is based. The submitted paper work must include any rules or policies that the

employee violated and set out any verbal or written warnings issued to the employee that related to the reason for discharge, including the date and nature of the last incident that triggered the decision to recommend termination. **Only the Superintendent has the authority to terminate an employee.** Termination for misconduct requires no notice. Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year or non-renewed at the end of the year according to the procedures outlined in District policies.

Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The time lines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee. Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or whose certification is revoked for misconduct.

Non-Contract 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 School District to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, religion, sex, national origin, disability, military status, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the School District process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance.

- **Resignation Procedures**

District employees should submit their letter of resignation to their immediate supervisor. The letter of resignation should include the effective date of resignation or the last day the employee will be physically working on the job. When the school administrator receives the resignation letter, it should be forwarded to the Superintendent. The administrator coordinates all separation information with the Finance Office. Resigning employees should obtain final approval of his or her time sheet and return any assigned equipment to his or her immediate supervisor. All District property must be returned for final clearance. The school administrator must verify receipt of property such as identification card, office keys, District inventory items, books, videos, and/or other materials checked out to the employee. The Superintendent or designee, i.e., school administrator, conducts an exit interview with all employees separating from employment with the School District.

The exit interview is a confidential discussion about the employee's reason(s) for resigning and other observations about the organization. The results of the exit interviews are useful in identifying any trends and possible improvement options. The exit interview should be scheduled on or before the employee's last physical day on the job. The employee completes all required forms on or before his last day physically on the job. The employee must provide the School District with a forwarding address. The Payroll Officer will conduct an audit of the employee's payroll records to ensure the amount due each employee is paid out after termination. Final salary warrants will not be issued until the employee has completed all forms and the Finance Office has processed them.

When you or your enrolled dependents are no longer eligible for the regular health coverage under our group insurance plan due to a "qualifying event", you may be eligible for continued coverage if you pay the monthly premium for the coverage. This is guaranteed to you under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) if:

- You were covered under the group plan under a qualifying event
- You are not eligible for Medicare
- You are not eligible for coverage under another employers group plan; and

- You have not applied to convert your group coverage to an individual health insurance policy.

Qualifying Events: Under COBRA, you have the right to choose continuation coverage if you lose your group health insurance because of a reduction of hours in employment or the termination of your employment (voluntary or involuntary) for reasons other than gross misconduct.

A covered spouse or dependent child has the right to choose continuation coverage under COBRA if coverage is lost for any of the following reasons (qualifying events):

- Employee death
- Termination of your employment or reduction in hours of employment
- Divorce or legal separation
- Employee becomes eligible for Medicare
- Employee's child is no longer considered a "dependent child" under the terms of the School Districts insurance policy.

You or your family member(s) has the responsibility of informing the School District within 60 days of a divorce, legal separation, or social security disability determination that a qualified beneficiary was disabled at the time of your termination or reduction in hours, or when one of your children loses eligibility for dependent status.

Noncontract Employees. Noncontract employees may resign their positions at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to their supervisor and or the Superintendent at least two weeks prior to the effective date. *(Employees are encouraged to include the reason for leaving in the letter of resignation.)*

• **Reports to State Board for Educator Certification**

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

- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other illegal conduct with a student or a minor
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of school property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle the individual to a professional position or to receive additional compensation associated with a position
- Committing a crime on school property or at a school-sponsored event

Employees who have questions about their certification status may contact the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

• **Employee Arrests and Convictions**

An employee who is arrested for any felony or any offense involving moral turpitude must report the arrest to the principal or immediate supervisor within **three** calendar days of the arrest. An employee who is convicted of or receives deferred adjudication for such an offense must also report that event to the principal or immediate supervisor within three days of the event. Moral turpitude includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud

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

- **Withdrawing Resignations**

Superintendent approval is required for an employee's request to withdraw his or her resignation. This request must be submitted in writing. When the employee has physically left the work assignment, they may not return until the Superintendent approval has been granted.

- **Exit Procedures**

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 School District with a forwarding address and phone number. All keys, books, property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment. The district may withhold the cost of any unreturned items from the final paycheck.

- **Grievance Procedures**

Employees are expected to work together in a courteous manner and always follow the chain of command in seeking relief for concerns and or complaints. If an employee has a problem with a policy or coworker, he or she is expected to work toward a solution directly with the person involved. Except for sexual harassment complaints where the supervisor is the subject of the complaint, all employees shall first bring their work-related complaints or concerns to their immediate supervisor. Complaints or concerns which are not resolved at the supervisory level may be brought to the attention of the Administrator within 15 days of the day the employee knew of or should have known of the issue or concern in question. The complaint or concern addressed to the Administrator must be submitted in writing using the approved school form, must be specific, and where possible, suggest a resolution. The Administrator shall attempt to respond to all written complaints or concerns within 10 days of the receipt of the written complaint.

If the employee is not satisfied with the Administrator decision, an appeal may be made to the Superintendent in writing outlining the concern and relief that the employee is seeking. If the employee is not satisfied with the Superintendent decision, he or she may appeal in writing to the Board of Trustees. Employees dissatisfied with the response of the Board of Directors may present their complaint to the State Charter School Board during a time designated for citizen input at its next regular meeting. The Board shall "stop, look, and listen" to the complaint but may not deliberate or act on the complaint except in compliance with the Open Meeting Act. Any decision by the State School Board will be final.

In an effort to hear and resolve employee complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted an orderly process that all employees must follow when bringing formal complaints and grievances. Employees are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with their supervisors or an appropriate administrator at any time.

The formal grievance 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 grievance procedures are exhausted, employees can bring grievances to the Board of Trustees. For ease of reference, the School District's policy concerning the process of bringing complaints and grievances is reprinted as follows:

- A grievance must specify the individual harm alleged. An employee is prohibited from bringing separate or several grievances regarding the same event or action. All time limits shall be strictly complied with unless modified by mutual consent.
- The party incurring the grievance shall pay cost of any grievance.
- When the Administrator and/or the Superintendent determine that two or more individual grievances are sufficiently similar in nature and remedy to permit their resolution through one proceeding, he or she may consolidate the grievances.
- Announcing a decision in the employee's presence constitutes communication of the decision. Unless otherwise specified in policy, an employee shall initiate a grievance as provided at **LEVEL ONE**.

LEVEL ONE An employee who has a grievance shall request a conference with the principal or immediate supervisor by submitting the grievance in writing on a form provided by the school. The form must be filed within **15 days** of the time the employee first knew or should have known of the event or series of events about which the employee is complaining. The principal or supervisor shall hold the conference within **10 days** after receipt of the written request. The principal or supervisor shall have **10 days** following the conference within which to respond.

LEVEL TWO If the outcome of the conference at **Level One** is not to the employee's satisfaction or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may request a conference in writing with the Superintendent or designee to discuss the grievance. The request shall be in writing on a form provided by the school and must be filed within **10 days** following receipt of a response or, if no response is received, within **10 days** of the response deadline. The Superintendent shall hold the conference within seven days after receiving the written request. The Superintendent shall have **10 days** following the conference within which to respond.

LEVEL THREE If the outcome of the conference at **Level Two** is not to the employee's satisfaction or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may submit to the Superintendent in writing a request to place the matter on the agenda of a future Board meeting. The request shall be in writing on a form provided by the school and must be filed within **10 days** following receipt of a response or, if no response is received, within **10 days** of the response deadline.

*The Superintendent shall inform the employee of the date, time, and place of the meeting. The Superintendent shall provide the Board with copies of the employee's original grievance, all responses, and any written documentation previously submitted by the employee and the administration. The Superintendent is not required to consider documentation not previously submitted or issues not previously presented. The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits. The Board shall hear the grievance and may request a response from the administration. The Board shall make an audiotape record of the **Level Three** proceeding at the Board meeting. The Board shall then make and communicate its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting.*

If the grievance involves the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of the employee bringing the grievance, the Board in closed meeting may hear it unless the employee bringing the grievance requests that it be heard in public. However, if the grievance involves a complaint or charge against another District employee or a Board member, it shall be heard in **closed meeting** unless the employee or Board member against whom the complaint or charge is brought requests an open meeting in writing.

- **Whistle Blower Grievances**

Employees shall not suffer any adverse personnel action for having reported, in good faith, a violation of law or policy to authority in a regulating, enforcing, investigating, or prosecuting branch of state or local government.

Employees who allege adverse employment action in retaliation for reporting a violation of law to an appropriate authority shall initiate a grievance under this policy within the time specified by law. The complaint shall first be filed in accordance with **LEVEL TWO**. Time lines for the employee and the School District set out in this policy may be shortened to allow the Board to make a final decision within **60 days** of the initiation of the complaint. The school shall post a notice in a prominent place in the workplace as prescribed by the Attorney General advising employees of their Whistleblower rights.

- **Workload and Schedules**

Professional and administrative employees are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10, 11, or 12 month basis, according to the work schedules set by the Superintendent. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule and school holidays for staff. Notice of work schedules including required days of service and scheduled holidays will be distributed each school year. Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation and conferences. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level.

- **Outside Employment and Tutoring**

Employees who wish to accept outside employment or engage in other activities for profit must submit a written request to their supervisor. Approval for outside employment will be determined by the Superintendent or designee and based on whether outside employment interferes with the duties of the regular assignment. Teachers are not allowed to privately tutor their students for pay, except during the summer months. Prior notification of this type of arrangement must be given to the Campus Principal.

- **Performance Evaluation**

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. Each position will have a job description that will be prepared directly from the program proposed objectives and the expectations and philosophy of the School District. Evaluations will be conducted by the program director in agreement with the Board of Trustees.

A written performance evaluation of each new employee shall be performed by his immediate supervisor at the end of the first 30 calendar days of employment and again at the end of 60 calendar days of employment. The third will be conducted at the end of the 90 day probationary period. The 60-day evaluation must indicate progress is satisfactory for the employee to get off probation at the end of the 90 days. An employee who assumes a new job position will be evaluated at the end of six weeks (45 days) and at the end of ninety (90) days. Should such an employee receive an unfavorable evaluation he/she will be placed in the first available position comparable to his/her previous position. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually.

Each evaluation will be completed by the employee's immediate supervisor. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda also can be used to document performance information. All employees will receive a copy of their written evaluation, have a performance conference with their supervisor, and get the opportunity to respond to the evaluation. The employee being evaluated will be required to review and sign his/her evaluation.

Any supervisor who requires any employee to sign an incomplete evaluation form is subject to immediate suspension and/or dismissal.

Any employee who is dissatisfied with their evaluation may appeal it through the “Chain of Command” process to the level of the Superintendent, which do not result in disciplinary action such as probation, are not appealable to the Board.

The Superintendent will be evaluated by the School District Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

- **Probation-Result of Evaluation**

Any employee whose work does not merit a positive evaluation may be placed on probation for a period not to exceed 90 calendar days. This probation must include notification in writing to the employee and the steps to be taken to get off probation. During the time of probation, he/she is to be given every opportunity, including intensive counseling and supervision, to bring his/her performance up to standard. However, if the employee fails to show satisfactory improvement, he/she may be terminated. An employee who improves satisfactorily must be so informed in writing.

- **Social Security Numbers**

It shall be unlawful for the School District to deny to any individual any right, benefit, or privilege provided by law because of the individual's refusal to disclose his or her social security number, but an employee must provide the District their social security number for employment purposes.

The above provision does not apply to:

- Any disclosure that is required by federal statute. The United States Internal Revenue Code provides that the Social Security number issued to an individual for purposes of federal income tax laws shall be used as the identifying number for taxpayers;
- Any disclosure to the School District maintaining a system of records in existence and operating before January 1, 1975, if such disclosure was required under statute or regulation adopted before such date to verify the identity of an individual; or
- Any use for the purposes of establishing the identity of individuals affected by any tax, general public assistance, driver's license, or motor vehicle registration law within the School District's jurisdiction.

- **Staff Development**

Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, Inc. Staff development for instructional personnel is predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, addressed in the campus improvement plan, and approved by a campus-level advisory committee. Staff development for non-instructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g., bus drivers) and continued employee skill development. Individuals holding renewable SBEC certificates are responsible for obtaining the required training hours and maintaining appropriate documentation.

- **Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing**

Non-investigatory searches in the workplace, including accessing an employee's desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable.

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

Employees who violate this prohibition shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Such sanctions may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation programs or employee assistance programs, termination from employment with the School District, and referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution.

Compliance with these requirements and prohibitions is mandatory and is a condition of employment. As a further condition of employment, an employee shall notify the Superintendent of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction. Within ten days of receiving such notice from the employee or any other source the School District shall notify the granting agency of the conviction. Within 30 calendar days of receiving notice from an employee of a conviction for any drug statute violation occurring in the workplace, the School District shall either (1) take appropriate personnel action against the employee up to and including termination of employment or (2) require the employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state, local health agency, or law enforcement agency. Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact the Superintendent.

Compensation and Benefits

- **School District Calendar**

On an annual basis, the district will develop a school calendar that will reflect the number of instructional days, grading periods, staff development, important dates, and summer campus. The calendar will also reflect the major holidays. *(July 4 will be taken as holiday. If July 4 falls on a Saturday, then the previous Friday will be taken off. If July 4th falls on a Sunday, then the following Monday will be taken off. If July 4th falls during the week, then July 4th will be taken off plus the following day.)*

- **Biometric Finger Reader**

Instructional Staff and Support Staff are expected to clock in on a daily basis. If employees find themselves unable to report to work on time or unable to report for their full-time day, they must inform their (1) immediate supervisor and (2) the Front Office at their earliest opportunity, but no later than 7:30 AM. Failure to do so may result in no pay for time missed. Absences and tardiness will be documented and if this behavior is persistent further disciplinary action will be imposed. The administration must determine on a daily basis if an individual is on campus or off campus in order to secure a substitute.

- **Salaries, Wages and Stipends**

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and a pay structure established for each position. The School District's pay plans are reviewed by the Superintendent each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional and administrative employees are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid based on hourly wages or provided compensatory time for each overtime hour worked. Work schedules are set by the supervisor. **All overtime must be requested in writing to a supervisor and pre-approved by a supervisor in writing before it is granted to an hourly employee.**

Salary and wage schedules are reviewed annually and adjusted according to the budgeted amounts approved by the Board. All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules before the start of each school year. Employees should contact their supervisor for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay. With the exception noted under annual leave, there will be no salary advances to any employee for any reason.

The administrator's salary may be paid from programmatic sources or from discretionary funds, if available. All other positions' salaries are determined by funding availability. The Superintendent can recommend raises that may be secured when budgets are negotiated. The School District subsidizes programmatic salaries with the approval of the Board of Trustees and if the School District is financially secure.

Starting Rate on Initial Employment - on original appointment to any position the salary shall be by successive steps beginning with entry level. The Superintendent and supervisor may approve initial compensation for positions at a higher step, provided the money becomes available. Experience, skill, loyalty to the District and labor market conditions must justify the action.

Rate of Pay on Promotion - in any case where an employee is promoted to a position with a higher salary grade, the entrance salary rate shall be at the lowest step in the higher salary schedule that will provide an increase over the salary received immediately prior to such promotion.

Cost of Living increases shall be given to all employees at the recommendation of the Superintendent and approved by the Board of Trustees to expend funds in this manner. The base salary for each grade and step will change accordingly to the percentage of the increase. Subject to fiscal limitation imposed by the funding source, cost of living increases shall apply across the Board for all eligible employees whenever possible. Merit raises will be awarded based on outstanding job performance and the availability of funds.

- **Paychecks**

All employees are paid semi-monthly, on the 15th and the last day of each month. Pay periods end on the 15th and the last working day of the month. Direct Deposit is available for all employees. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the School District employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization. An employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information. Monthly time sheets will be maintained on all employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration. Time and Attendance Reports shall be maintained and completed by the individual employee. The employee signs the report certifying that the reported information is correct. All reports must be approved by their immediate supervisor. Payroll checks are subject to the approval of the Time and Attendance Reports before disbursement.

- **Payroll Deductions**

Automatic payroll deductions for the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) and federal income tax are required for all full-time employees. Medicare tax deductions also are required for all employees hired after March 31, 1986. Temporary and part-time employees who are not eligible for TRS membership must have their Social Security contributions deducted. Employees may elect to include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for medical insurance. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

- **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor and superintendent must give written approval. (*Request for Travel Form*) For approved travel, employees may be provided cash/check advance or will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by the School District. In no event shall reimbursement exceed the State and or Federal mandated travel reimbursement rates; the lower of these two rates shall apply.

The School District provides travel allowances for employees to attend staff training activities, conferences that promote staff development and the overall goals and objectives of the organization. Travel allowances may also be provided to employees to conduct the regular business of the organization outside the organization's service delivery area.

All payments for travel by employees, consultants, and members of the governing or administrative boards must be supported by properly approved travel vouchers covering both travel and if applicable, per Diem. Mileage will be payable to only one of two or more persons traveling together on the same trip and in the same vehicle. Local travel expenses for persons whose positions requires daily or intermittent travel should be covered by a general travel voucher and should only be reimbursed after presentation of a local travel expense statement submitted at regular intervals. Employees will be reimbursed at a rate not to exceed the State or Federal allowable rates. Whenever a privately-owned vehicle is used for official purposes, as a matter of personal preference, in lieu of common carrier transportation, payment on a mileage basis shall be limited to the constructive cost of appropriate common carrier transportation or the statutory maximum, whichever is less and not to exceed the State or Federal allowable rates.

For travel of less than twenty-four (24) hours when a night's lodging is not required, the per Diem rate will be adjusted downward to reflect the fact that the traveler did not incur costs for lodging and is entitled only to an allowance for sustenance expenses other than lodging.

Per Diem expenses will be reimbursed at the Federal and State maximum mandated rates for meals and room accommodations. Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is not allowed. Taxi fares, bus fares, and automobile parking will be paid not to exceed the State and Federal allowable rates. The employee is required to submit an after-travel report; to include travel related expense receipts, within 10 days upon return from a business trip. Vouchers submitted after the 10-calendar day due date and within 30 calendar days after returning from a trip, will result in a delay in reimbursement. Vouchers submitted 60 calendar days or more after returning from a trip shall be designated as late submittals and must be accompanied by an explanation for the delay.

All allowable costs of late submittals should be reimbursed within 60 days of receipt of a properly submitted reimbursement request. Car rentals must be approved by the Superintendent and are paid at actual costs. The district is not responsible for any liabilities due to thefts of personal property, accidents, or traffic citations while the traveler is on official travel with a rented vehicle. Proof of a valid driver's license and current auto liability insurance must be on file with the corporate office to be eligible for car rentals.

Less than first-class travel accommodations shall be used in all instances except the following:

- The reason(s) for traveling first class must be shown on travel vouchers submitted for reimbursement.
- These accommodations do not exist or are not available within a reasonable time.
- Less than first-class would result in high overall cost because of required routing, time urgency, baggage differential or other factors;
- Physical conditions of the traveler or other extenuating circumstances require the use of first class.

Employees will not be reimbursed for costs incurred due to mechanical and/or other automotive malfunctions.

- **Medical Insurance**

The district provides employees medical insurance and employees may elect to include payroll deductions for the employee's share of premiums for medical insurance. The School District shall notify its group health plan administrator within 30 days of an employee's death, termination or reduction of hours, or becoming eligible for Medicare payments.

The qualified beneficiary is responsible for notifying the plan administrator of a divorce or legal separation from a spouse or of a dependent child's ceasing to be a dependent. A qualified beneficiary who is determined to have been disabled at the time of termination is responsible for notifying the plan administrator of that determination within 60 days of the determination and within 30 days after a subsequent determination that he is no longer disabled.

- **Termination of Coverage**

Coverage of qualified beneficiaries shall end on the earliest of the following dates:

- The required period of coverage expires.
- The district ceases to provide any group health plan to any employee.
- Coverage ceases for failure to pay the premium.
- The qualified beneficiary becomes covered under any other group plan.
- The qualified beneficiary becomes entitled to Medicare benefits.
- The remarriage of a person who is a qualified beneficiary because of being the spouse of a covered employee.

- **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

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

- **Unemployment Compensation Insurance**

The School District shall contribute to the Unemployment Compensation Fund by paying a state unemployment compensation tax administered by the Texas Workforce Commission. However, it is important to understand that, because the School District provides educational services in accordance to the rules and regulations promulgated by the Texas Education Agency, i.e., the Texas Education Code (TEC), it is by definition an educational institution. Employees who work for an educational institution may not be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits, based on services with said institution, during any scheduled school breaks (including, but not limited to, the summer, winter, and spring breaks). This is true if an employee has a contract or reasonable assurance of continued employment. Unless advised otherwise, all employees have reasonable assurance of continued employment with the School District after each of these breaks. Therefore, if an employee applies for unemployment compensation benefits during the aforementioned breaks, the School District will understand that the employee has chosen to resign. An employee who resigns may not be eligible for unemployment benefits based on their service with the School District.

Employees provided reasonable assurance of continued employment would not have to:

- Reapply for employment (if returning for employment in the same capacity),
- Complete another 90-day probationary period, or
- Re-establish or lose eligibility for company benefits previously established.

- **Teacher Retirement**

Automatic payroll deductions for the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) are required for all full-time employees. All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least one-half of the normal work schedule are members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). For new employees, there is a 91-day waiting period before TRS membership begins. A substitute not receiving TRS service retirement

benefits who work at least 90 days a year are also eligible for TRS membership and to purchase a year of creditable service. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits. Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the Superintendent as soon as possible. Additional inquiries should be addressed to: Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (www.trs.state.tx.us).

Leaves and Absences

- **Proper Notification**

Daily time schedules for all employees shall be determined by an employee's supervisor, designee, principal, or superintendent. If employees find themselves unable to report to work on time or unable to report for full-time, they must inform their (1) immediate supervisor (2) the Front Office at their earliest opportunity, but no later than 7:30 AM.

- **Personal Leave**

The School District offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need. A full-time employee is allotted 5 days beginning in August through June. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence. Employees who have personal needs that will require long leaves of absence should call the immediate supervisor for counseling about leave options, continuation of benefits, and communicating with the district. There are two types of personal leave: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

Nondiscretionary Leave that is taken for personal or family illness, emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. This type of leave allows very little or no advance planning and will be granted to employees in the same manner as sick leave.

Discretionary Leave that is taken at an employee's discretion and that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a notice of the request **two weeks in advance** of the anticipated absence to his or her principal or supervisor. Discretionary personal leave will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis. 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. Employees who take an unpaid leave of absence may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health care benefits for employees on leave authorized under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the employee at 100% of the cost. The School District does not make benefit contributions for employees who are not on active payroll status. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to do the job.

- **Personal Leave Benefits**

DMLGG provides paid leave benefits to all eligible employees for periods of temporary absence for personal business, vacation, illness or emergencies. When an employee requests leave, the supervisor and the Superintendent will approve or disapprove the leave based upon the department work needs at the time of the request. Eligible employee classification(s) for personal leave benefits are full-time employees and part-time employees working half-time or more. For full-time employees, Personal Leave is 5 days from September-May. For part-time employees, Personal Leave is earned at the beginning of the school year. If an employee begins work after the fiscal year has started, he/she will earn 2 1/2 day per school year. Employees who are unable to report to work must notify their immediate supervisor before the scheduled start of their workday if possible; that information will in turn be directed to the Payroll Department. Employees who miss more than 3 consecutive days of work because of illness or

medical condition are required to provide a physician's verification of illness letter to their immediate supervisor prior to returning to work. The immediate supervisor sends the letter to the Superintendent, who then forwards the letter to the Payroll Department. Unused state leave benefits will be allowed to accumulate without limit. State and local leave accruals are **not** eligible for payment at termination.

- **Temporary Disability**

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. The leave 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 90 calendar days. If disability leave is not approved, the employee must return to work or be subject to termination procedures. Employees must follow district and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate leave request form. 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. 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.

- **Pandemic Leave**

The District provides a pandemic leave allotment. Please check with your Campus Principal for further details.

- **State Personal Leave**

State personal leave is the leave that has been traditionally granted by school districts. Employees were granted sick leave and personal leave prior to 1995. After 1995, the state changed all leave to personal leave. Personal leave can be used for personal business, vacation, sick days or emergencies. Personal leave cannot be taken for more than three days at one time unless it is used as sick leave and with the approval of the immediate supervisor in consultation with the Superintendent. For full-time employees, State Personal Leave is 5 days per year from August–June. If an employee begins work after the fiscal year has started, the employee will receive 2 1/2 days of leave. For part-time employees, State Personal Leave is 2 1/2 days per year from September – May. If an individual leaves employment with a school district and or ESC Service Center, any balance of state personal leave earned is recorded on his/her service record. DMLGG Charter School shall accept the transfer of unused state personal leave accrued by former school district and state agency employees after September 1, 1997. An employee may transfer no more than five days of unused leave for each year of school district or state agency employment.

- **Family and Medical Leave**

Employees who have been employed by the district for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months immediately preceding the need for leave are eligible for family and medical leave. Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of **unpaid** leave each year between September 1st and May 30th for the following reasons:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child
- To care for a spouse, parent, or child with a serious health condition
- An employee's serious health condition

A husband and wife who are both employed by the Charter School are subject to limits in the amount of leave that they can take to care for a parent with a serious health condition or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. Eligible employees are entitled to continue their health care benefits, but premiums will be paid by the employee at 100% of the cost. Family and medical leave runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, and absences due to a work-related

illness or injury. The Charter will designate the leave as family and medical leave, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

In some circumstances, employees may take family and medical leave in blocks of time or by reducing their normal weekly or daily work schedule. Intermittent leave may be taken under the following circumstances:

- An employee is needed to care for a seriously ill spouse, child, or parent
- An employee requires medical treatment for a serious illness
- An employee is seriously ill and unable to work
- An employee becomes a parent or has a foster child placed in his or her home

When the need for family and medical leave is not foreseeable, employees who want to use it must provide 30-day advance notice of their need. When the need for leave is not foreseeable, employees must contact the superintendent as soon as possible. Employees may be required to provide the following: (1) Medical certification from a qualified health care provider supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting the employee or an immediate family member (2) Second or third medical opinions and periodic recertification of the need for leave (3) Periodic reports during the leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work (4) Medical certification from a qualified health care provider at the conclusion of leave of an employee's ability to return to work. Employees requiring family and medical leave should contact the superintendent for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

- **Assault Leave**

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

- **Bereavement Leave**

If an employee wishes to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member, defined here as a qualifying event, the employee should notify his or her supervisor immediately. Up to three days of paid bereavement leave will be provided to eligible employees who have achieved regular full-time employment status. One day will be provided for extended family members. Approval of bereavement leave will occur in the absence of unusual operating requirements. Any eligible employee may, with the supervisor's approval, use any available paid leave for additional time off as necessary. If a death in the immediate family occurs while an employee is already on leave, he or she will be eligible for bereavement leave. The employer defines "immediate family" as the employee's spouse, parent, child, sibling; the employee's spouse's parent, child, or sibling; the employee's child, spouse, grandparents or grandchildren. With the approval of the Supervisor, special consideration may be given to any other person whose association with the employee was similar to any of the above relationships.

- **Jury Duty**

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

- **Other Court Appearances**

Employees will be granted paid leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding. Other absences for court appearances related to an employee's

personal business must be taken as personal leave or leave without pay (if no personal leave is available). Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

- **Military Leave**

Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, or reserve component of the armed forces will be granted a leave of absence without pay for authorized training or duty orders. Military leave granted on an individual basis will not exceed 5 years. In addition, an employee is entitled to use available personal or sick leave during a time of active military service. 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 18 months. Employees should contact the Superintendent for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations, Re-Employment After State Military Leave: Employees who leave the School District to enter into active duty with the Texas National Guard may return to employment if they are honorably discharged or released within five years. Employees who wish to return to the School District will be re-employed in the same position they previously held or reassigned to a position of similar seniority, status, and pay, provided they are still qualified to perform the required duties of the position and a position is available within the district. Application for re-employment and evidence of honorable discharge or release must be submitted to the Corporate Office within 90 days of discharge or separation.

- **Re-Employment After Federal Military Leave**

Re-Employment After Federal Military Leave. Employees who leave the School District to enter into the United States uniformed services may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the School District will be re-employed in the position they would have held if employment had not been interrupted or reassigned to an equivalent or similar position provided they are still qualified to perform the required duties and a position is available within the district. To be eligible for re-employment 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 re-employment.

- **Voting in Elections**

Employees are encouraged to fulfill their civic responsibilities by voting. If an employee is unable to vote in a county or statewide election during his or her non-working hours, then that employee shall be allowed sufficient time off to vote without deduction from pay or leave time accrued. However, the District does not grant employees time off to vote if the polls are open for two consecutive hours before or after their schedule work hours. Employees should request time off to vote from their supervisor at least two working days prior to election day so that the necessary time off can be scheduled at the beginning or end of the work shift, whichever provides the least disruption to the normal work schedule.

- **Maternity Leave**

The School District will not discriminate against any employee who requests an excused absence for medical disabilities associated with a pregnancy. Such leave requests will be made and evaluated in accordance with family and medical leave policy provisions outlined in this handbook and in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws. Requests for time off associated with pregnancy and for childbirth (apart from medical disabilities associated with these conditions) will be considered in the same manner as any other request for unpaid personal leave.

- **Extended Leave of Absence**

The School District will grant an extended leave of absence for illness, injury, or pregnancy. When an employee becomes disabled and the disability is medically supported, the School District may grant an extended leave of absence. During this time, the employee may use earned state or personal leave. When earned state or personal leave has been exhausted, the employee will be placed on a leave of absence without pay. Time spent on an approved leave of absence is considered to be continuous employment.

with respect to service date. While on an approved leave of absence without pay, earned state or personal leave will not accrue. In addition, performance and merit pay reviews will be adjusted to reflect time spent on leave of absence without pay. The maximum time allowed for an extended leave of absence is 90 days from the time an employee is placed on a leave of absence without pay. Employees who are not able to return to work at the end of this time period will be considered terminated. It is the responsibility of the employee to keep their supervisor informed of the continuing disability. This includes appropriate physician certification to this effect.

- **Religious Observation**

The School District shall reasonably accommodate an employee's request to be absent from duty in order to participate in religious observances and practices, so long as it does not cause undue hardship on the conduct of District business. Such absence shall be without pay unless applicable paid local leave is available.

Employee Relations and Communications

- **Staff Communications**

Staff communications with students, parents, and other staff members must be conducted in a positive and professional manner at all times. Personal discussions that involve controversy should be kept to a minimum. Derogatory comments about students, parents and staff members or members associated with the district will not be tolerated. Employees must follow the “Chain of Command” when trying to resolve a complaint.

- **Computer Use and Data Management**

The School District’s electronic communications systems, including its network access to the Internet, are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use of the system 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

An employee will always be held responsible for the proper use of an email account, and the School District may suspend or revoke access if the rules are violated. Remember that people who receive e-mail from a District employee with a school address might think the message represents the school's point of view. Employees are required to sign an “Acceptable Technology Use” policy.

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications systems are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use. Personal passwords that are utilized to access the school district’s computers must be submitted to the Technology Technician. Employees and students who are authorized to use the systems are required to abide by the provisions of the district’s communications systems policy and administrative procedures. Some inappropriate uses of district technology include the following:

- Using the system for any illegal purpose.
- Disabling or attempting to disable any Internet filtering device
- Encrypting communications to avoid security review.
- Borrowing someone's account without permission.
- Downloading or using copyrighted information without permission from the copyright holder.
- Intentionally introducing a virus to the computer system.
- Posting messages or accessing materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.

- Wasting school or District electronic resources through improper use of the computer system.
- Gaining unauthorized access to restricted information or resources.

Failure to follow the district's technology policy may result in suspension or termination of privileges and may lead to further disciplinary action. Please note that the Internet is a network of many types of communication and information networks. It is possible that you may run across some material that you might find objectionable. While the District will use filtering technology to restrict access to such material, it is not possible to absolutely prevent such access. It is your responsibility to follow the rules for appropriate use. Employees with questions about computer use and data management may contact your immediate supervisor.

- **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 School District.

- **Opportunities for Development**

All employees are given the opportunity to be promoted to an existing or new position within the organization. Opportunities for promotion are based on job performance and competency in the skill required for the higher-level position. Only the Superintendent makes decisions regarding promotions. Salaries are adjusted based on new responsibilities within the established salary guidelines. Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the district. Staff development is predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives and developed and approved by the campus administrator or district or campus-level advisory committees.

- **Gifts and Favors**

Employees may not accept gifts or favors directly/indirectly that could influence, or be construed to influence, the employee's discharge of assigned duties. All potential donations must be approved by the administration. No employee is allowed to receive any gifts or donations for services provided. 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.

- **Employee Security Keyless card**

A security keyless entry card will be issued to all employees at the time of employment. This card is not to be shared with anyone at any time. If the card is lost or stolen, the employee is required to notify the Finance Director immediately. The employee is solely responsible for this card. If lost or stolen, the individual holder of the keyless card will be responsible for replacement cost of the card which is \$80.00.

- **Fund Raising**

District level fundraising of any kind and for any reason must be approved in writing by the campus principal and or the Superintendent. No employee or individual may conduct a fundraiser in the name of the district without specific authorization. Requests to conduct fund raising must be submitted in writing and must justify as to why a fundraiser is required. If permission is requested and granted, the fundraising process must be followed.

- All monies collected in the fundraising must be deposited as soon as the proceeds are realized (daily at least) in the general account of the DMLGG Charter School.
- Proceeds will be turned in to the Finance Director or Accountant who will issue a receipt each time money is deposited.

- The proceeds will be deposited in the general operating account and a profit and loss statement and financial report will be provided to the Superintendent.

- **Associations and Political Activities**

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.

- **Discrimination Prohibited**

The FMLA prohibits interference with an employee's rights under the law, and with legal proceedings or inquiries relating to employee's rights. An employer is prohibited from interfering with, restraining, or denying the exercise of (or attempts to exercise) any rights provided by the FMLA. An employer is prohibited from discriminating against employees or prospective employees who have used FMLA.

- **Notice to Employees**

The School District shall post and keep posted in prominent places on each campus where notices to employees are usually posted, a notice approved by the Secretary of Labor that sets out excerpts from or summaries of the Family and Medical Leave Act and information pertaining to the filing of a charge. If the District's workforce is comprised of a significant portion of workers who are not literate in English, the School District shall be responsible for providing the information required by the notice in a language in which the employees are literate.

Employee Conduct and Welfare

- **Standards of Conduct**

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

- Communicate clearly with their immediate supervisor of any concerns and or complaints.
- Recognize and respect the rights and property of students and coworkers and 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 School District procedures and policies.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use of School District time, funds, and property for authorized district business and activities only.

All School District employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, District policy, and ethical standards for professional educators. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to State Board of Education Certification (SBEC) not later than the seventh day the superintendent first learns of the incident.

***The Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators is reprinted below:
Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators***

Statement of Purpose

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom.

The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession.

The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community.

Professional Standards

1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

- **Violations of Standards**

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

- **Harassment**

Employees who believe they have been harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to their immediate supervisor and/or campus principal. If the campus principal or supervisor is the subject of a complaint, the employee shall report the complaint directly to the Superintendent. An employee who suspects or knows that a student is being harassed by a school employee or by another student shall inform his or her principal or immediate supervisor. Any allegation of harassment of students or employees shall be investigated and addressed.

An employee may appeal the decision of the principal or supervisor regarding the investigation into the allegations in accordance with the employee complaint and grievance policy and procedures. To the greatest extent possible, complaints shall be treated as confidential. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The district will not retaliate against an employee who in good faith reports perceived harassment.

- **Sexual Harassment**

Employee-to-Employee. Sexual harassment of a co-worker is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct under the following conditions:

- Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions.
- The conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or otherwise offensive work environment.

Employees who believe that they have been sexually harassed by another employee are encouraged to come forward with complaints. The district will promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment and will take prompt appropriate disciplinary action against employees found to have engaged in conduct constituting sexual harassment of other employees. The district's policy outlining the process of filing complaints of sexual harassment is reprinted below:

- An employee who believes he or she has been or is being subjected to any form of sexual harassment shall bring the matter to the attention of the principal or immediate supervisor.
- No procedure or step in this policy shall have the effect of requiring the employee alleging harassment to present the matter to a person who is the subject of the complaint.

Employee-to-Student. Sexual harassment of students by employees is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. Sexual harassment of students includes any welcome or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other oral, written, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature. Romantic relationships between district employees and students are strictly prohibited. Any District employee who receives information about sexual harassment or sexual abuse of a student that may reasonably be characterized as known or suspected child abuse or neglect shall report to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. An employee who suspects or knows that a student is being sexually harassed or sexually abused by a school employee or by another student shall inform his or her principal or immediate supervisor. The School District shall notify the proper authorities and parents of any

incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee. Any allegations of sexual harassment or sexual abuse of students shall be investigated and addressed by the administration.

In considering and investigating allegations that an employee has sexually harassed or sexually abused a student, the investigation shall proceed from the presumption that the employee's conduct was unwelcome. Other prohibited conduct includes the following:

- Engaging in sexually oriented conversations for the purpose of personal sexual gratification
- Telephoning students at home or elsewhere and engaging in inappropriate social relationships
- Engaging in physical contact that would reasonably be construed as sexual in nature
- Enticing or threatening students to get them to engage in sexual behavior in exchange for grades or other school-related benefits
- In most instances, sexual abuse of a student by an employee violates the student's constitutional right to bodily integrity. Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to, fondling, sexual assault, or sexual intercourse.

- **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

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. Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to a local office or to the **Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400)**. State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the District is prohibited from retaliating against an employee who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect. An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution for the commission of a Class B misdemeanor. ***In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.***

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agencies. In addition, employees must cooperate with child abuse and neglect investigators. Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report to the appropriate state agency. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

- **Safety**

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 entering and leaving into our School District Campus. Additionally, all employees will be required to use the employee keyless door access card when entering the school building. All employees when arriving first and departing last from the school building are responsible of arming or disarming the security alarm system. The Safety Program also includes 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 plus prevent the infestation of roaches, rodents, pests, etc. employees must comply with the following requirements:

- Keep work areas clean and orderly at all times.
- If food is brought into the building it must be in a container that is leak proof and must not be accessible to students. Food in the classrooms is highly discouraged because of the infestation of roaches, rodents, pests, etc. plus the district must minimize the activation of any food allergies that students may have.
- Observe all safety rules.
- Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor.
- Operate only equipment or machines in which you have received prior training and authorization.

All employees shall adhere to District safety rules and regulations and shall report unsafe conditions or practices to the appropriate supervisor. Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact their immediate supervisor.

- **Tobacco Use**

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

- **Alcohol and Drugs**

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

- Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
- Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.
- Any glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation.
- Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drugs.
- An employee need not be legally intoxicated to be considered "under the influence" of a controlled substance. Exception to this policy is an employee who uses a drug authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for that employee's use should not be considered to have violated this policy.

- **Possession of Firearms and Weapons**

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, or other weapons onto school premises or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, only a designated public safety officer may carry a weapon on campus. Employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisors or call the Police Department at 911 immediately.

- **Copyrighted Materials**

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of copyright laws relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance, or display of copyrighted materials (i.e., printed material, videos, computer data and programs, etc.). Rented videotapes are to be used in the classroom for educational

purposes only. Duplication or backups of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

- **Pest Control Treatment**

Pest control treatments will be conducted on a monthly and quarterly basis as per the district's maintenance agreement. The cafeteria will be chemically treated on a monthly basis, the building and grounds will be treated chemically on a quarterly basis. Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located in the faculty lunchroom. Pest control information sheets are available from the Finance Office upon request. Pests will only survive in our facilities if they have water, food and shelter. If you remove one of those variables the pests will not be able to exist.

General Procedures

- **Grooming and Dress**

The dress and grooming of School District employees shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for their assignments, and in accordance with any additional standards established by their supervisors and approved by the Superintendent. Personnel are expected to dress in a manner that projects a professional image for the employee, district, and the community. The style of clothing for males and females should always reflect a professional and business-like atmosphere. All employees of the district are role models and should dress and groom accordingly on a daily basis. The following are guidelines that address grooming and dress for employees:

- Administrators, Counselors, staff, and District Office Personnel should maintain a traditional professional dress Monday-Thursday. Staff should never wear shorts or gym attire during instructional time or when representing our district (this includes coaches and custodians). Hats, caps, or other head apparel are not to be worn in the building unless it is a special day of celebration and only with administrative permission. Also shower type flip-flops or rubber clogs (Crocs) are **NOT** to be worn at school. Dresses and skirts must also be worn at an appropriate length.
- During the traditional school year, blue jeans may be worn **only on Fridays** with a school spirit shirt or a professional style shirt that may reflect our school colors. Jeans should not be usually faded or contain holes. Colored jeans may be worn as long as they meet the professional dress code. (Undergarments shall not be visible or exposed). *Staff members may dress casually for workdays as directed by the campus principal or supervisor.*
- Proper daily grooming and daily hygiene are of the most importance in projecting a professional environment. Staff members are expected to properly groom on a daily basis and create a climate of professionalism at all times. In keeping with professional dress, hair must be a natural color and must be kept clean and groomed. Facial hair must also be a natural color and be kept clean and groomed. ***COVID and other contagious diseases do NOT thrive when an individual practices good hygiene on a daily basis.***
- Visible tattoos and similar paintings that are considered offensive, inflammatory, gang related or disruptive to the learning environment are prohibited.
- Employee ID tags must be worn while on duty and during any events when representing our district.

A reminder that you represent our district at all times, professional dress and behavior is expected for in and out of district workshops and staff development. Questionable attire and or grooming practices will be addressed on an individual basis by your supervisor. ***“Always Dress for Success”***

- **Signing In and Out**

Employees must sign in and out for the hours worked on a daily basis. Failure to follow this procedure may result in loss of pay. All employees are responsible for the maintenance of their attendance i.e., timecard. No employee may document the attendance of another. Employees must also sign in and out when leaving campus for lunch, workshops, etc. A Time Off Request is to be completed **one week** in advance of scheduling any event that will take the employee off campus. Employees are to adhere to the scheduled lunch period assigned them.

- **Name and Address Changes**

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

- **Visitors in the Workplace**

All visitors will be allowed into the school through the eastside main entrance doors via the school Receptionist. Once inside the school, all visitors are expected to sign in at the receptionist desk and get a Visitor's Pass, and upon leaving the campus the visitor must return to the receptionist's area to return the Visitor's Pass and to sign out on the sign-in/sign-out log. 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. COVID Protocols will be followed at all times.

- **Bad Weather Closing**

The School District may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late or to release students early, an announcement will be made on the school district's website, local radio and television stations will be notified by the parental involvement coordinator and school officials. Please make sure you are always connected to your Campus Principal.

- **Emergencies**

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

- **Lesson Plans/Grade Books**

Teachers are required to implement the district approved curriculum which is Texas Resource System and submit weekly lesson plans to the principal. Copies of instructor lesson plans will be submitted on line on Thursday but no later than Monday morning of each week. Lesson plans should be a reflection of the instruction the teacher will present in each course assigned.

The lesson plan should state the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), objectives, activities, resources, and the assessments as well as accommodations to address the instructional needs of all students. All teachers are required to maintain on-line and paper grade books which contain daily attendance records and grades. A minimum of 2 grades are required per week. Grade books will be turned in to the school principal at the end of the school year, in completed form and at regular intervals, if requested. Six weeks and yearly averages must be clearly labeled.

- **Grading System**

General Guideline: An evaluation and reporting system shall be maintained to assess each student's progress in development, performance and achievement. Such a system is designed to provide both students and parents with information concerning the educational performance and progress of the student. The basic consideration for evaluation is that of assessing the student's degree of mastery of the TEKS for each subject or course. The School District shall establish a procedure to ensure that all students demonstrate an acceptable level of mastery of TEKS for a subject or course as a prerequisite to the award of a grade of 70 or above indicating at least minimal mastery of the TEKS. Grades for each reporting period shall be determined by a combination of daily grades, major exams and/or projects. Teachers are required to maintain six-week, semester and end of year averages in their electronic and paper grade books

- **Progress Reports**

Progress reports will be sent to students every third week of the six-week period.

- **Report Cards**

Report cards, complete with all necessary information, are issued after each six-week period as indicated on the school calendar.

School personnel shall maintain effective communications with the parent or guardian. This shall be accomplished by:

- **Report Cards - Grades Pre-K through 8th Grade**

At least once every six (6) weeks, the School District shall give written notice to parents or guardians of students' grades in each subject or course.

- Numerical grades based on a scale of 0-100 shall be used on the report card for all subjects and courses.

70 and above = passing

69 and below = failing

- Excused and/or unexcused absences shall be recorded on the report card.

If, in any subject a student receives a grade equal or less than 70, the grade notice shall state the need for a conference between the appropriate teacher and the parent or guardian.

- Pre-K and Kinder will receive a progress report every six weeks.

- **Semester Grades**

Each semester grade shall be determined by averaging the three six weeks' grades. Unless credit is awarded by the attendance committee or regained in accordance with District policy, a student shall not be given credit for a class if the student has not attended for at least 90% of the given semester.

Grade Placement Eligibility Criteria:

1. Students retained in the same grade;
2. Students who did not meet standard on recent STAAR/Exam;
3. Students who are at least two years below grade level in reading;
4. Students who are at least two years below grade level in math;
5. Students score less than 70 percent on the School District checklist of essential skills;
6. Documented teacher recommendation.

Decisions on retention and alternatives to retention will be made by the campus principal with recommendations from teachers. All retentions or alternative to retention will be reviewed by the Superintendent and committee. The committee will consist of administration, teacher, counselor, parent and student.

- **Duty**

Employees will be assigned extra duty as needed to supervise students. Employees should report to their assigned duty areas on time. The duties assigned may be morning/after school duty, morning cafeteria duty and any other duty where student safety must be monitored.

- **Staff Meetings**

Staff meetings will be called on a regular basis or as the need arises. Attendance and punctuality are a component of the evaluation/appraisal system.

- **Student Field Lessons/Field Trips**

Some instructional activities may necessitate occasional deviations from the classroom time requirements. However, in scheduling such activities, the principal shall use professional discretion to assure that the activities have a specified instructional purpose.

- A Bus Request Form must be submitted to the campus administrator by the teacher(s) requesting the field lesson at least four weeks prior to the activity. The teacher, prior to submitting the form, must make preparatory arrangements with the site.
- Final approval of the trip by the campus administrator will be completed at least two weeks prior to the activity.
- Upon approval, the teacher(s) must secure a parental permission slip signed by the parent or guardian for each participant and secure adequate supervision.
- Teachers will include the field lesson in their lesson plans and will provide an introductory lesson and summarization lesson for each field lesson.
- No student shall be denied the opportunity for participation in a field lesson due to his/her economic limitations. No grades or extra academic gains can be given to participants of a field lesson; therefore, non-participants cannot be penalized for not making a particular field lesson.
- No field lessons may be taken during periods of district wide testing.

- **In-Service Meetings**

Required in-service training is held periodically and directors, teachers, and academic staff are expected to participate.

- **Collection of Monies**

No money will be collected for any purpose without prior approval of the principal or immediate supervisor. All funds collected must be turned in to the finance office daily.

- **Telephones**

The telephones in the offices and classes are to be used for school business only. Advise your relatives, friends, etc. to call only on urgent business. Cell phone use should be kept to a minimum. It is strongly suggested that cell phones be placed on mute so as not to interfere with the instructional day and normal work schedule. Please inform your Campus Principal if your phone is not working.

- **Textbooks**

All textbooks will be issued to the teacher by the instructional consultant upon submitting a Textbook Requisition form. Teachers are responsible for all textbooks, teacher editions and any other instructional material issued to them.

- **Parental Involvement**

The District's Title I program shall be planned, designed, and implemented with the meaningful consultation with parents of participating students. This consultation shall be organized, systematic, ongoing, informed, and timely in relation to decisions about the program. The School District shall:

- Develop written policies, after consultation with and review by parents, to ensure parental involvement, including the School District's commitment to give timely responses to recommendations by parents, and make those policies available to parents of participating students.
- Convene an annual meeting, to which all parents of participating students are invited, to explain the programs and activities provided in the Title I program.
- Provide parents with reports of their children's progress.
- To the extent practical, conduct a parent-teacher conference with the parents of each student to discuss the student's progress, placement and methods the parent can use to complement instruction.
- Make personnel readily accessible to parents.
- Permit parents to observe Title I program activities.
- If parents desire, provide opportunities for regular parent meetings to formulate parental input to the program.
- Provide parents with timely information about the program.
- Make parents aware of parental involvement requirements and other relevant program matters.
- Provide reasonable support for parental involvement activities, as parents may request.
- Assist in coordinating, to the extent possible, parental activities.
- To the extent practicable, provide information, programs and activities for parents in a language and form that the parents understand.
- Through consultation with parents, annually assess the effectiveness of the parent involvement program and determine what action needs to be taken, if any, to increase parental participation.

- **Purchasing Procedures**

All requests for purchases must be approved by your supervisor before submitting them to the Finance Department on an official School District Purchase Requisition Form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the School District can be made without a PO number. The School 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 School District's Finance Office. Contact your immediate supervisor and the Finance Office for additional information on purchasing procedures.

- **Purchasing Policy**

The School District conducts purchasing and acquires goods and services in order to keep the operations of the agency current and efficiently operational. All original purchase requests are made through the Finance Office.

The Finance Office is responsible for making sure that all tax exemption requirements have been met in order that the School District is not charged a sales tax. All purchases of the School District must be made by observing the following purchasing procedures:

- No purchase is made for goods and/or services unless the funding source has approved the expenses to be incurred in the acquisition of the item.
- Ordinary purchases of supplies, materials, and minor items will be ordered collectively - each program places an order and the order is carried out simultaneously to facilitate efficiency and cost effectiveness.

- Purchases will be made only from vendors approved by the district and or the Education Service Center Region 2 or any other QSIV approved vendors. The School District is a member of the purchasing cooperative and its utilization saves our funding sources and this agency money.
- No item or service that has not been approved, in writing, or by budget approval, by our funding sources will be purchased, unless approved in writing by your supervisor and Superintendent.
- Goods are to be ordered once per month, received, sorted, and inventoried by the accounting department and only then distributed to the program director of each specific program requesting the order.
- When equipment above \$49,999.99 is purchased, it is required to first obtain three bids in written form as to the dollar amount, quantity, warranties, and time that the price is guaranteed for. The Finance Department will review the bids with the Superintendent and select what items will be purchased.
- Other purchases which exceed \$50,000.00 require Board approval. These purchases follow the process as outlined in the item above with the distinction that all final decisions must be made by the Board of Trustees of the School District.
- Contracts for Services: The District contracts for services with different suppliers, vendors, businesses, etc. The Superintendent and Business Manager is responsible for seeing that contracts with landlords, vendors, equipment suppliers, utility providers, etc. are allowable expenditures within the state and federal purchasing guidelines and are evaluated annually either for renewal or change.

- **Building Use**

The Superintendent is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the Superintendent to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged. COVID protocols will be followed.

- **Receiving Purchases**

The receiving of merchandise will be performed by the designated person in the Finance Office. The employee will review the invoice, shipping order, bill of lading, and review the quantity to be received, and compare to the purchase order. The employee will not be able to authorize any purchases individually. The employee will then receives the items, sort the items, inventory the items, and attach a permanent identification tag to fixed asset items. Finally, after making all required reports and verifying all supporting documentation, the accountant will disburse the purchases to the appropriate departments obtaining a written signature of the person receiving the items purchased.

If the items are fixed assets of a long-term nature, the person receiving the items is responsible for the safeguarding of the items until its return to the fixed asset accountant who only then issues a return item report from the person returning all fixed assets.

- **Return of Property**

All employees are responsible for the following items issued to them or in their possession or control:

- Keys
- Keyless entry card
- Instructional Written Materials
- Inventoried Items (such as computers, calculators, etc)
- Any material purchased with school funds

Employees must return all property of the district that is in their possession or control in the event of termination of employment, resignation, and layoff or immediately upon request. Where permitted by applicable laws, the employer may withhold the employee's check or final paycheck for the cost of any

item(s) that are not returned when required. We may also take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect the property of the School District.

- **Records Management**

The School District shall implement a records management system that conforms to the system required of school districts under the Local Government Records Act, §201.001 et seq., Local Government Code, and rules adopted there under; provided, however, records subject to audit shall be retained and available for audit for a period of not less than five (5) years from the latter of the date of termination or renewal of the charter.

- **Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding**

The district is required to report the termination of employees who are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance 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& Records

- **Student Records**

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 individuals are the only persons who have general access to a student's records:

- Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes.
- The student (if 18 or older or attending an institution of postsecondary education).
- School officials with legitimate educational interests.

- **Parent and Student Complaints**

Parents are encouraged to communicate with staff members and teachers in order to resolve complaints. In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted orderly processes for handling complaints on different issues. Any campus office or the Superintendent's office can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint. Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teachers or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved 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**

Only parents will administer medications to their student(s).

- **Dietary Supplements**

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 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**

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

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

- **Student Discipline**

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management strategies that have been adopted by the School District. Other employees who have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or principal. Teachers must file a written report with the principal or another appropriate administrator when they have knowledge that a student has violated the Student Code of Conduct. A copy of this report will be sent by the principal or administrator to the student's parents within 24 hours.

- **Student Attendance**

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the School District policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require 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 principal for additional information.

- **Consent to Medical Treatment**

The school in which a minor student is enrolled may consent to medical, dental, psychological, and surgical treatment of that student, provided **all** of the following conditions are met:

- The person having the power to consent as otherwise provided by law cannot be contacted.
- Actual notice to the contrary has not been given by that person.
- Written authorization to consent has been received from that person.

- **Form of Consent**

Consent to medical treatment under this policy shall be in writing, signed by the school official giving consent, and given to the doctor, hospital, or other medical facility that administers the treatment. The consent must contain:

- The name of the student.
- The name of one or both parents, if known and the name of the managing conservator or guardian of the student, if either have been appointed.
- The name of the person giving consent and the person's relation to the student.
- A statement of the nature of the medical treatment to be given.
- The date on which the treatment is to begin.

- **Self- Administration of Asthma Medicine**

A student with asthma may possess and self-administer prescription asthma medicine while on school property or at a school-related event or activity if:

- The medicine has been prescribed for that student as indicated by the prescription label on the medicine;
- The self-administration is done in compliance with the prescription or written instructions from the student's physician or other licensed health-care provider; and

- A parent of the student provides to the school:
 - Written authorization, signed by the parent, for the student to self-administer the medicine while on school property or at a school-related event or activity; and
 - A written statement, signed by the student's physician or other licensed health-care provider, that states:
 - That the student has asthma and is capable of self-administering the medicine;
 - The name and purpose of the medicine;
 - The prescribed dosage for the medicine;
 - The times at which or circumstances under which the medicine may be administered; and
 - The period for which the medicine is prescribed.

The physician's statement must be kept on file in the office of the principal of the school the student attends.

The provisions above neither waive any liability or immunity nor create any liability for or a cause of action against the District, the Board, or its employees.

Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, Inc.

Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School

Employee Handbook Receipt

Name: _____ Assignment _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of my personal copy of the Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, Inc., Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School Employee Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

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

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

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

Employee Agreement for Acceptable Use of the Electronic Communication Systems

I understand that my computer use is not private and that the School District may monitor my activity on the computer system to ensure appropriate use in accordance with the School District's electronic communications systems policy and administrative regulations.

I have read the School District's electronic communications system policy and administrative regulations and agree to abide by their provisions. In consideration for the privilege of using the School District's electronic communications system and in consideration for having access to the public networks, I hereby release the School District, its operators, and any institutions with which they are affiliated from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my use of, or inability to use, the system, including, without limitation, the type of damages identified in the School District's policy and administrative regulations.

Acknowledgement of Employee Handbook Receipt and Technology Agreement

Signature

Date

Note: Please make a copy of this signed form. Keep the copy for your personal records and submit the original to the Personnel Office.