

HOUSTON R-I DISTRICT



STAFF HANDBOOK

2025 – 2026

**Houston R-1 School District
206 W. Spruce Street
Houston, MO 65483**

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From the Superintendent

I would like to welcome you to the Houston School District for the 2025-2026 school year! It is my privilege to be serving this school and community. The Houston District is founded on a dedicated staff, talented students, supportive parents, and involved community members. The Houston School District is a place where safe and effective learning exists, academic achievement is promoted, and fostering student growth is a core expectation.

Through a positive culture of students and staff, we will continue to build a school that sets the standard of excellence. The best will be what Houston is! #thebestwillbe

I welcome the challenges and look forward to celebrating the successes that we will attain in our journey to improve student outcomes in the Houston School District.

This handbook has been carefully prepared to provide you with needed information to manage a successful year. This handbook does not include all district procedures and policies. This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official District Policy Manual. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of some District policies and procedures. District policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible. More information and updated policies can be found on the Houston R-I School District website at www.houston.k12.mo.us.

Thank you, in advance, for all that you will be doing for our students and for the district. I extend my best wishes to you for a successful year.

Mission

Expecting Excellence...Learning for All

Vision

We are becoming a district where the adults in our schools create, maintain, and work incessantly to enhance a culture of learning and collectively accept the responsibility for ensuring that every student graduates with the tools needed for success.

#thebestwillbe

#houstonfutureready

#thetigerway

#ourteamourtown

CSIP Goals

<p>MISSION: EXPECTING EXCELLENCE. LEARNING FOR ALL.</p> <p>THE BEST WILL BE HOUSTON FUTURE READY</p> <p>THE TIGER WAY</p> <p>OUR TEAM OUR TOWN</p> 	<p>FOCUS AREA ONE: LEADERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Create & implement a long-range facility master plan by the end of the 2023-2024 school year.•Ensure all staff salaries, wages, and benefits will meet or exceed districts within the conference and county for the 2026-2027 contract cycle.	<p>FOCUS AREA TWO: EFFECTIVE TEACHING & LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Develop and implement a comprehensive multi-tiered system of support that addresses the emotional and social needs of each student within the district by the end of the 2024-2025 year.•Identify evidence-based instructional practices, provide professional development, and create a plan to implement practices by 100% of the instructional staff by the beginning of the 2024-2025 academic year.•Assess all students bi-annually in grades K-5 to identify and create individualized reading plans for students with a significant reading deficiency, with the goal of having all students at or above grade level or demonstrating on-track progress.	<p>FOCUS AREA THREE: COLLABORATIVE CLIMATE & CULTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Provide a safe environment that supports teaching, learning, and student success through the development of a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) by the end of the 2023-2024 academic year.•Develop a district-wide plan to address high academic and behavior expectations by the end of the 2024-2025 academic year.•Increase parent, community, and student survey participation on district approved surveys to 70% during the 2023-2024 academic year and thereafter.
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Personnel Goals

The personnel employed by the district constitute the most valuable resource for effectively producing a quality learning program. Important contributions to a successful education program are made by all staff members. The District's program will function best when it employs highly qualified personnel, encourages appropriate staff development activities, and establishes policies and working conditions which are conducive to high morale and which assist each staff member in making the fullest contribution to district programs and services.

Board of Education

Missouri law grants the Board of Education 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 curriculum, school taxes, annual budget, employment of the Superintendent and other professional staff, facilities, and expansions. The Board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal law and regulations. The Board of Education is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the District's children. Board members are elected at large and serve without compensation, must be registered voters and must reside in the District.

The Board of Education usually meets the second Tuesday of each month. Meetings begin at 5:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Missouri law permits the Board to go into a closed session. Circumstances that may be included are personnel issues, including conferences with employees and employee complaints, security matters, student discipline, or to consult with attorneys regarding pending litigation, real estate property acquisition, etc.

2024-2025 Board of Education

President	Jennifer Scheets
Vice President	Darren Ice
Treasurer/Secretary	Jeff Gettys
Member	Dustin Hartman
Member	Charlie Malam
Member	Marty Merckling
Member	Tressie Neugebauer
Board Secretary	Tanya Bathon

Administration

Superintendent	Dr. Justin Copley
High School Principal	Mrs. Amanda Munson
Asst. High School Principal	Mr. Eric Sloan
Middle School Principal	Mrs. Tracy Hughes
Elementary Principal	Mrs. Jody Jarrett
Asst. Elementary Principal	Mr. Shane Pitts
Process Coordinator	Mrs. Samantha Courter
Curriculum Director	Mrs. Wytney Steelman
Exceptional Child Cooperative Director	Ms. Jennifer Johnson

Below you will find frequent topics of interest that describe the expectations of classified and certified employees. Some of the items will be directly linked to the Houston R-I Board of Education policy. As stated above, Board of Education policy supersedes all handbook language. Please click on the link to find the full text policy.

Attendance (Policy [GCBDA](#) // [GDBDA](#)) (Staff Short-Term Leaves and Absences)

Consistent contact with students and staff is important to the learning environment and district operation and therefore is an essential duty of a professional staff member's position. However, the board recognizes that there are circumstances that require an employee to miss work, and the purpose of this policy is to identify situations where paid and unpaid leave from work are appropriate.

Topics under this policy include (but not limited to): Annual leave days (ALD), guidelines for ALDs, ALD reimbursement, vacation, bereavement leave, holidays, professional leave, jury duty leave, military leave, election leave, leave for court subpoena, firefighter leave, crime victim leave, leave to vote, civil air patrol leave, coast guard auxiliary leave, victim's economic safety and security act leave, pregnancy, childbirth, and adoption leave.

Arrival and Departure Time

Administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals are to report to work at 7:35 a.m. and remain until 3:25 p.m. daily, unless given a specific directive to deviate from this schedule by a direct supervisor. Deviations can include, but not limited to, assigned morning or afternoon duties. All other positions will have their arrival and departure times determined by their respective supervisors.

Association and Political Campaigns ([Policy DCB](#))

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.

No contribution or expenditure of district funds shall be made directly by any board member, employee or agent of the district to advocate, support or oppose the passage or defeat of any ballot measure or the nomination or election of any candidate for public office. District funds also cannot be provided to any committee supporting or opposing a ballot measure or candidate or be used to pay any debts or obligations of any committee. This does not prevent board members or administrators from making public appearances or issuing press releases concerning any such ballot measures.

Reasonable expenditures may be made solely for the purpose of providing patrons of the district with objective information regarding ballot measures to inform voters concerning issues that directly affect the district.

Breakfast/Lunch Charges ([Policy EF-AP\(1\)](#))

Unless meals are provided at no charge, the district expects students and employees to pay for meals prior to or at the time of receipt. The ability to charge meals is a privilege, not a right, and is subject to the limitations established in this procedure. The link above outlines the procedure.

Employees are welcomed to eat breakfast and lunch in the district's cafeterias. Adult prices for the 2025-2026 school year are \$4.50 for lunch and \$2.80 for breakfast. Meals need to be paid for, in full, each month. Employees may authorize the district to withhold the amount of any unpaid charges from the employee's pay.

Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit annually. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis. Insurance programs include health, dental, vision, supplemental employee life insurance, supplemental spouse life insurance, legal protection, identity theft protection, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer and dread disease, term life insurance, medical reimbursement account, flexible spending account, disability, and hospital indemnity. A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts. Please pay close attention to notification of open enrollment dates as they are different for each plan.

Certification Status

Employees in positions requiring certification are expected to obtain and maintain appropriate certification for all grade levels and subjects taught. Board approved contracts for professional employees stipulate that current certification status is a condition for employment. Members who are temporarily certified or are not appropriately certified, must make adequate progress to become highly qualified and properly certificated for the area that they are teaching.

Chain of Command ([Policy BDDH-1](#)) (Public Participation at Board Meetings)

For an organization the size of the Houston School District, to function effectively, it is important to observe an appropriate chain of command with regards to policy, supervision, and decision making matters. Personnel should address questions, concerns, or complaints first with their immediate supervisor, then progress up the chain of command as needed. If after addressing a concern with the district superintendent resolution has not been achieved, the proper procedure for addressing the school board is to request it to be placed on the agenda for the next board meeting. Agenda requests should be submitted to the superintendent's office at least five days prior to the board meeting.

The school board is acutely aware that board members are elected to serve the public, and the board seeks to conduct its business transparently. The district encourages the public to attend open school board meetings and other public meetings in person and, when available, virtually. In addition, there are some instances where members of the public may be provided the opportunity to speak at a school board meeting. As an extension of policy KC, Community Engagement, the board has created a policy and procedure for receiving input from students, employees and community members.

Communicable Diseases ([Policy EBB](#))

The Houston R-I School District School Board recognizes its responsibility to protect the health of students and employees from the risks posed by communicable diseases. The Board also has a responsibility to protect individual privacy, educate all students regardless of medical condition and treat students and employees in a nondiscriminatory manner. The following information can be found in this policy: immunizations, universal precautions, categories of potential risk, exceptional situations, confidentiality, reporting and disease outbreak, and notification.

Staff Grievances ([Policy GBM](#))

The Houston R-I School District is interested in employee concerns and ideas for improving the district. District employees are encouraged to discuss concerns with supervisors and the administrative staff so that issues may be addressed in a timely fashion.

Grievance Process

1. Grievances must be filed within ten (10) days of the occurrence that is the basis of the grievance. The grievance must be in writing, on the forms provided by the district, and include a copy of the provision of the policy or regulation alleged to be violated or misinterpreted, as well as a statement of the relief requested.

2. Grievances will be processed according to the step-by-step process outlined below, with the following exceptions. If a person designated to hear a grievance is the subject of the grievance, the grievance process will begin at the next highest step. If a grievance is directly based on official Board action, the grievance shall be directed to the Board secretary. The grievance may be heard by the Board at the sole discretion of the Board.
3. No new information may be added and no new claims may be made after Step 1. Each subsequent appeal will address only the facts and issues presented at Step 1.
4. The deadlines established under this policy may be extended upon the written request of the grievant or the supervisor, but the final decision regarding any extension shall be made by the superintendent at his or her sole discretion. Investigation and reporting deadlines will be extended when more time is necessary to adequately conduct an investigation and to render a decision. The grievant will be notified when deadlines are extended.
5. Failure of the grievant to appeal within the timelines given will be considered acceptance of the findings and remedial action taken. The district will not consider late appeals.
6. Once a decision is rendered under this grievance process, the decision is final. Grievance decisions cannot be the subject of a new grievance.
7. Because the point of a grievance is to provide resolution outside the court system, an employee is not entitled to bring an attorney to grievance proceedings. Once an attorney becomes involved in the process, the superintendent or designee will refer the matter to the district's private attorney and the grievance process will end.

Immediate Supervisor/Principal or Designee (Step 1)

1. Employees are encouraged to informally notify their immediate supervisor/principal or designee of a grievance. If the issue is not resolved, the employee should submit a written grievance, on forms provided by the district, to the immediate supervisor/principal or designee. The written grievance must clearly indicate that it is a grievance and specify which provision(s) of policy, regulation or collective bargaining agreement were allegedly violated.
2. The principal or immediate supervisor shall have a period of not more than five (5) days during which he or shall hold a conference with the grievant. Following the conference, but not later than ten (10) days of receiving the written grievance, the immediate supervisor/principal or designee will investigate the matter and render a decision in writing. A copy of the decision will be provided to the grievant.

Superintendent or Designee (Step 2)

1. Within 15 days after receiving the decision at Step 1, the grievant may appeal the decision in writing, using forms provided by the district, to the superintendent or designee. The appeal must clearly state why the previous decision is erroneous.
2. The superintendent or designee shall schedule and hold a conference within five (5) days of receipt of such grievance. The superintendent or designee will, within three (3) days of receipt of the appeal, review the investigation and render a decision in writing to the grievor, the principal or designee and the griever's immediate supervisor.

School Board or Board Committee (Step 3)

Within 15 days after receiving the decision at Step 2, the grievant may appeal the decision in writing, using forms provided by the district, to the Board of Education. The Board of Education, at its sole discretion, may decide to hear the grievance.

Computer Use and Data Management ([Policy EHB](#))

The Houston R-I School District's technology exists for the purpose of enhancing the educational opportunities and achievement of district students. Research shows that students who have access to technology improve achievement. In addition, technology assists with the professional enrichment of the staff and increases engagement of students' families and other patrons of the district, all of which positively impact student achievement. The district will periodically conduct a technology census to ensure that instructional resources and equipment that support and extend the curriculum are readily available to teachers and students.

The purpose of this policy is to facilitate access to district technology and to create a safe environment in which to use that technology. Because technology changes rapidly and employees and students need immediate guidance, the superintendent or designee is directed to create procedures to implement this policy and to regularly review those procedures to ensure they are current.

Confidentiality ([Policy EHBC](#))

Confidentiality of student information is extremely important. Information about students should never be shared with anyone other than a parent or legal guardian outside of school personnel. Information should only be shared with other school personnel when there is an educationally justifiable reason for doing so.

Contracts and Compensation Plans ([Policy GCBA](#))

The Houston R-I School District needs highly qualified employees to accomplish its education mission and must offer competitive compensation to attract and maintain experienced professional staff in the district. The board directs the superintendent or designee to annually research regional and statewide trends in employee compensation and consult with district employees to prepare competitive salary schedules and salary recommendations for the board to consider, within the constraints of the district's finances. Only the board has the authority to increase an employee's regular compensation or grant employees an extra-duty position or stipend.

As required by law, teachers will be paid in accordance with a board-adopted salary schedule. All full-time teachers will be paid at least the minimum teacher's salary as required in state law. Non-certificated professional staff and certificated staff members other than teachers will be compensated in accordance with a board-approved salary schedule or will receive the amount of compensation approved by the board for particular positions or particular employees.

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends ([Policies GCBA, GCB, GDB](#))

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and a pay structure established for each position. The District's pay schedules are reviewed by the School Board 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 overtime pay for each overtime hour worked. Overtime must have prior approval from the employee's supervisor.

Dismissal and Suspension ([Policy GCPD](#), [GDPD](#))

The Board delegates to the superintendent the authority to suspend staff members or put them on administrative leave for any legal reason in accordance with district policy and law. An employee will be immediately suspended or put on administrative leave in situations where the superintendent or designee determines that suspension is necessary to prevent disruption to the education environment, protect the safety of the students, appropriately investigate alleged misconduct, or in other circumstances where suspension serves the district's interests.

Drug-free Workplace ([Policy GBEBA](#))

Student and employee safety is of paramount concern to the Board of Education. In recognition of the threat to safety posed by employee use or possession of drugs or alcohol, the Board of Education commits itself to a continuing good-faith effort to maintain a drug-free workplace. The Board of Education shall not tolerate the manufacture, use, possession, sale, distribution or being under the influence of controlled substances, alcoholic beverages or unauthorized prescription medications by district employees on any district property; on any district-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or district activities; off district property at any district-sponsored or district-approved activity, event or function, such as a field trip or athletic event, where students are under the supervision of the school district; or during any period of time such employee is supervising students on behalf of the school district or is otherwise engaged in school district business.

When it is evident that an employee has consumed alcoholic beverages or controlled substances off school property before or during a district activity, the staff member will not be allowed on school property or to participate in the activity and will be subject to the same disciplinary measures as for possession or consumption on district property.

Staff members will be tested for alcohol and controlled substances if the district has reasonable suspicion that the staff member has violated this policy. In addition, staff members who operate district transportation must submit to alcohol and drug testing as otherwise required by law. All testing will be conducted in accordance with Board policy, administrative procedures and law.

Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension, termination and referral for prosecution. Employees may be required to satisfactorily participate in rehabilitation programs.

Each employee of this school district is hereby notified that, as a condition of employment, the employee must abide by the terms of this policy and notify the superintendent or designee of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in or on the premises of this school district, or while engaged in regular employment. Such notification must be made by the employee to the superintendent or designee in writing no later than five (5) calendar days after conviction. The superintendent or designee will provide notice in writing of such violation to the United States Department of Education or other appropriate federal agency within ten (10) calendar days after the superintendent or designee receives such notification if the district receives any federal grants directly from such agency, as opposed to federal grants received through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

The district will take appropriate disciplinary action within 30 days.

The district will institute a drug-free awareness program to inform employees of the dangerous and harmful nature of drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace, of this policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace, of available counseling and rehabilitation, and of the penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace.

The Board of Education recognizes that employees who have a drug abuse problem should be encouraged to seek professional assistance. Although the district will not assume financial responsibility, an employee who requests assistance shall be referred to a treatment facility or agency in the community if such facility or agency is available.

Upon the request of DESE or an agency of the United States, the district shall certify that it has adopted and implemented the drug prevention program described in this policy. The district shall conduct a biennial review of this policy to determine its effectiveness, implement necessary changes and ensure that the disciplinary sanctions are consistently enforced.

This policy shall be communicated in writing to all present and future employees. Compliance with this policy is mandatory.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing ([Policy GBEBB](#), [GBEBB](#))

It is the intent of the Board of Education and Administration of the Houston School District that employees comply with all federal and state laws pertaining to a drug-free workplace and a drug-free school environment. Accordingly, the Board has prepared and adopted policies that define the expectations and obligations of employees in a drug-free workplace and environment.

The policy specifically bans the use, possession, consumption or sale of illegal drugs, alcohol and other substances that create a risk to employees and students. Likewise, legal drugs are banned when their use in the workplace could result in danger or difficulty on the job.

Employees must comply with these policies as a condition of employment. Employees of the District must recognize their responsibilities as role models for the students; therefore, employees who violate these policies will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension, termination and/or referral for prosecution.

Non-investigatory searches in the workplace, including assessing 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 worksites or used in District business.

Reasonable Suspicion Drug Testing

The District reserves the right to require testing of any employee for alcohol and/or drug intoxication or use while on any District premises, facilities, or worksites, or while conducting District business or attending any school-related function or activity, on or off school property. Failure to submit to such testing will be considered as testing positive and will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Safety-Sensitive Positions

Employees assigned to positions that have been classified as safety-sensitive shall be subject to random drug/alcohol testing under the guidelines and procedures as established by the District for drivers of commercial motor vehicles, including school buses.

Chemical Dependence Health Policy

District employees diagnosed as chemically dependent shall receive the same consideration and opportunity for treatment extended to district employees with other types of illnesses. The district's responsibility is limited to the effects on the employee's job performance. A diagnosis of chemical dependency in and of itself or the employee's request for treatment for chemical dependency, will not affect job security or professional opportunities.

Employees Required to have a Commercial Driver's License. Any employee who is required to have a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to drug and alcohol testing.

Electronic Communication of Student and Staff Information (Policy GBH)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act provides privacy protection for "personally identifiable information" regarding present and former students. These protections require the District and its employees to keep personally identifiable information confidential. This information includes any personal data about a present or former student that would allow anyone to identify the student, including, but not limited to the student's name, photograph, parents' names, address, physical attributes, nicknames, date of birth, telephone number, etc.

Information about students in the District is not an acceptable subject for web-blogs, discussions on social networking web-pages or *personal* electronic mail messages. Staff members should refrain from engaging in *social* interaction with students on the internet or through electronic mail. As employees of a public entity, faculty and staff of the District should be aware of their responsibility to maintain a professional image which is conducive to the performance of their job duties and is consistent with the mission of Houston Schools. Employees should be cautious to ensure that pictures, comments, and stories about themselves posted on publicly accessible websites are appropriate for viewing by the public and do not hinder the employee's ability to maintain a professional image.

Employee Use of Facilities

Employees may use school equipment after school hours at their own risk. Employees may bring family members to use equipment after school hours at their own risk. However, the employee must be present and supervising the entire time that the family members use the equipment. At no time should any non-employee be given access to the school building without an employee being present. This includes family members of all ages. DO NOT GIVE YOUR KEYS TO YOUR CHILDREN OR ANYONE ELSE FOR ANY REASON. DO NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO HAVE A COPY OF A KEY MADE. If you see non-employees in the building you should question them as to why they are in the building and who they are being supervised by, no matter the age. If they do not have an employee supervising them, then you should ask them to leave the building. Exceptions to the rule above would be a group who follows school policy to rent a facility.

School owned equipment should not be taken off campus for personal use without administrative approval.

Enforcement of Student Rules (Policy JG)

It is essential that the district maintain a safe school environment and a climate that allows teachers to communicate effectively with all students in the class and allows all students in the class to learn. Discipline will be equitably applied and viewed as a learning opportunity with the ultimate goal of improving behavior, safety and the school climate. The district seeks to minimize the unnecessary exclusion of students from classrooms and school and encourages the superintendent and district staff to exclude students only when necessary to maintain a safe and appropriate learning environment. Topics in this policy include: discipline code, equity, discipline for off-campus misconduct, immediate removal, enforcement, and training.

Equal Employment Opportunity (Policy AC)

The Houston R-I School District Board of Education is committed to maintaining a workplace and educational environment that is free from illegal discrimination, harassment and retaliation in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs, services, activities and facilities. In accordance with law, the district strictly prohibits discrimination and harassment against employees, students or others on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law. The Houston R-I School District is an equal opportunity employer.

The board also prohibits:

Retaliatory actions including, but not limited to, acts of intimidation, threats, coercion or discrimination against those who:

Make complaints of illegal discrimination or harassment.

Report illegal discrimination or harassment.

Participate in an investigation, formal proceeding or informal resolution, whether conducted internally or outside the district, concerning illegal discrimination or harassment.

Aiding, abetting, inciting, compelling or coercing illegal discrimination, harassment or retaliatory actions.

Discrimination, harassment or retaliation against any person because of such person's association with a person protected from discrimination or harassment in accordance with this policy and law.

As used in this policy, "discrimination, harassment or retaliation" has the same meaning as "illegal discrimination, harassment or retaliation" and is limited to acts prohibited by law. All employees, students and visitors must immediately report to the district for investigation any incident or behavior that could constitute discrimination, harassment or retaliation in accordance with this policy. If a student alleges sexual misconduct on the part of any district employee to any person employed by the district, that person will immediately report the allegation to the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services in accordance with state law.

Staff Conduct (Policies GBCB)

The Board of Education expects every employee to act professionally, ethically and responsibly; use good judgment; and do what is necessary to maintain a safe learning environment and positive relations with students, parents/guardians, coworkers and the public. In addition to expectations in other Board policies and directives from supervisors, district expectations for employees include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Become familiar with, enforce and follow all applicable Board policies and regulations, administrative procedures, other directions given by district administrators and supervisors, and state and federal laws.
2. Maintain courteous and professional relationships with students, parents/guardians, other district employees and the public. Transmit constructive criticism to the particular school administrator or supervisor who has the administrative responsibility to address the concern. Employees will not be disciplined for speech that is protected by law and are encouraged to share concerns with their supervisors.
3. Actively participate in professional development and obtain information necessary to effectively perform the employee's job duties.
4. Conduct all official business in a professional and timely manner. Meet deadlines set by the district, administrative staff and supervisors. Conduct business with the appropriate designated person or department.
5. Care for, properly use and protect school property. Immediately report all dangerous building conditions to the building supervisor and take action to rectify the situation in order to protect the safety of students and others. Take appropriate action to prevent loss or theft of district property, and immediately report loss or theft of district property.
6. Attend all meetings called by supervisors or the district administration unless excused. Arrive at work and leave work at the time specified by the district or as directed by a supervisor, and follow district policies, procedures and directives regarding absences. All nonexempt employees must receive permission from a supervisor prior to working overtime.
7. Maintain records as required by law, Board policy and procedure, and do not destroy records unless authorized to do so. Keep all student records, medical information and other legally protected information confidential. Submit all required documents, information, data or reports at the time requested. Employees must not falsify records, create misleading records or compromise the accuracy and security of district data.
8. Properly supervise all students. The Board expects all students to be under assigned adult supervision at all times during school and during any school activity. Employees must not leave students unsupervised except as necessary to handle an emergency situation.
9. Obey all safety rules, including rules protecting the safety and welfare of students.
10. Communicate clearly and professionally. Employees will not use profanity and will not raise their voices unless necessary. Written communication must be grammatically correct. Employees will not be disciplined for speech that is protected by law and are encouraged to share concerns with their supervisors.
11. Dress in a professional manner that does not interfere with the educational environment and as directed by administrators or supervisors.
12. Other than commissioned law enforcement officers, school employees shall not perform strip searches, as defined in state law, of students except in situations where an employee reasonably believes that the student possesses a weapon, explosive or substance that poses an imminent threat of physical harm to the student or others and a commissioned law enforcement officer is not immediately available.
13. School employees shall not direct a student to remove an emblem, insignia or garment, including a religious emblem, insignia or garment, as long as such emblem, insignia or garment is worn in a manner that does not promote disruptive behavior.

14. State law prohibits teachers from participating in the management of a campaign for the election or defeat of a member of the Board of Education that employs such teacher.
15. Unless otherwise allowed by law, employees may not engage in political campaigning during the working day or during times when they are performing their official duties.
16. Employees will not represent their personal opinions as the opinions of the district and, to avoid confusion, are required to clearly indicate when they are speaking or writing as an individual and not a representative of the district.

Staff Conflict of Interest ([Policies GBCA](#))

All employees of the Houston R-I School District shall adhere to the laws regarding conflict of interest and avoid situations where their decisions or actions in their employment capacities violate the provisions of this policy or conflict with the mission of the district. Topics of this policy include: purchases involving federal funds, sale, rental or lease of property, independent contractor services, additional prohibitions, use of confidential information, administrative and executive employees, and financial disclosures.

Health, Life Insurance, and Long-Term Disability ([Policy GCBC](#))

Group health insurance is available through the district. The District's contribution to employee insurance premiums is currently 100% and is determined annually by the Board of Education.

Current employees can make changes in their health insurance coverage during open enrollment each year. Currently the district requires employees to request changes to their health insurance by the last day of school in May. Please pay close attention to notification on enrollment deadlines each year. You will be notified of updated rates and deadlines via email. Employees should contact Rachel Fishel in the Central Office for more information on insurance benefits.

HIPPA

On August 21, 1996, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) was signed into law. HIPAA's main goal is to protect the health coverage of people who switch from one job to another or leave a job without taking another one. To achieve this goal of making health coverage more "portable," the law limits the use of pre-existing conditions exclusions, waiting periods and eligibility restrictions based on health status.

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) ([Policy IGBA](#))

IEPs are legally binding documents. It is the responsibility of all instructional staff to be aware of IEP contents of students assigned to them and to make all accommodations stipulated in the document.

Job Vacancy Announcements ([Policy GCD and GDC](#))

It is the responsibility of the superintendent, with the assistance of the administrative staff, to determine the personnel needs of the school district and the individual schools. District administrators locate suitable candidates to recommend to the Board for employment.

The district's hiring procedures comply with all federal and state hiring practices. All candidates will be considered on the basis of qualifications, training, experience and ability to fulfill the requirements of the position. Recruitment procedures will not overlook the talents and potential of individuals already employed by the school system.

Job Descriptions ([Policy GDA and GDA](#))

The superintendent will maintain a comprehensive and current set of job descriptions for all positions in the district. Job descriptions shall be available in the office of the superintendent during regular business hours.

Leaves and Absences-Professional Staff ([Policy GCBDA](#))

Annual Leave Days – Annual leave days (ALD) are available to full-time professional staff employees to provide greater flexibility in the use of their time off. Professional staff employees whose assignments call for 12 month full-time employment will receive 14 days of leave. Professional staff employees whose assignments call for full-time employment only during the regular school term will receive 12 days of leave per fiscal year. Each employee shall have his or her current and cumulative ALD's available beginning on his or her first working day of each school year or employment contract. Unused ALD's will be cumulative to 90 days. Any absence up to four hours shall be counted as a half-day of ALD.

Annual leave days shall be earned over the full term of employment. Therefore, employees working less than a full term (new hires or terminations) shall receive a prorated share of the ALDs based on length of employment during the current school year compared to a full term of employment.

For employees terminating employment, adjustments will be made in the final payroll check. Any employees receiving an overpayment shall reimburse the district within 30 days of termination.

Absences may be charged against ALD's for the following reasons:

a. Illness, injury or incapacity of the employee. The Board reserves the right to require a healthcare provider's certification attesting to the illness or incapacity of the claimant and/or inclusive dates of the employee's incapacitation. FMLA health certification procedures apply to FMLA-qualifying absences, even if such absences are paid ALD.

b. Illness, injury or incapacity of a member of the immediate family. The Board defines "immediate family" to include:

- ▶ The employee's spouse.
- ▶ The following relatives of the employee or the employee's spouse: parents, children, children's spouses, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings and any other person living with or wholly dependent upon such employee.
- ▶ Any other person over whom the employee has legal guardianship or for whom the employee has power of attorney and is the primary caregiver.

(Note: "Family" for FMLA purposes is more limited.)

- c. Pregnancy, childbirth and adoption leave in accordance with this policy.
- d. Tax investigation.
- e. Court appearances, unless applicable law or policy provides for paid leave.
- f. Wedding, graduation or funeral.
- g. Observance of a religious holiday.

h. Conducting personal business of such a nature that it cannot be performed on a Saturday, Sunday or before or after school hours, including parent-teacher conferences. This also includes medical or dental appointments.

i. Absences under leaves authorized by law, policy or the Board that would otherwise be unpaid including, but not limited to, leave under the FMLA.

j. Staff members who are ill are encouraged to stay home to promote healing and reduce the risk of infecting others, especially during a pandemic or other significant health event. In the event of a pandemic or other significant health event, schools may be closed to all staff and students or just students. If schools are closed only to students, staff members are expected to work regular schedules or use appropriate leave.

k. Other personal situations approved by the superintendent or designee.

Guidelines for ALD Use

1. A district employee may not use ALD's during the period the employee receives Workers' Compensation for time lost to work-related incidents.

2. Any certificated employee who is a member of a retirement system shall remain a member during any period of leave under ALD provisions of the district or under Workers' Compensation. The employee shall also receive creditable service credit for such leave time if the employee makes contributions to the system equal to the amount of contributions that he or she would have made had he or she been on active service status.

3. ALD's must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance, whenever possible, and must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor except for unexpected illness, emergencies or unusual circumstances. However, 30 days' notice is required by law if the leave qualifies as FMLA leave and such notice is practical. Employees must also comply with established procedures for notification of absence and arrangements for substitute coverage. Employees who are unexpectedly absent and provide proper notification to obtain a substitute, but are unable to receive prior approval by his or her supervisor may be subject to denial of ALD use and/or disciplinary action if the absence does not fall within one of the above exceptions. The use of ALD may be limited based on substitute availability.

4. Paid ALD's are considered time worked for benefit purposes, but they shall not be considered as hours worked for overtime purposes.

5. In the event of an employee's death, all accrued ALD shall be paid to the designated beneficiary at the current daily rate of pay for a substitute.

6. Requests for advances on unearned ALD's shall not be permitted.

7. Paid ALD's shall not be used on the following days, except for extenuating circumstances with special permission from the superintendent. The school must be able to secure a substitute before leave will be approved:

- a. Before or after a holiday.
- b. Early release days or when an in-service is scheduled.
- c. First and last two weeks of school.

8. An employee who is absent for reasons other than those specified under Board rules, or by reason of fraudulent application of district leave provisions, shall be subject to disciplinary action that may include pay reduction, and other sanctions, up to and including termination of employment.

ALD Reimbursement – All employees will be reimbursed at the current rate of substitute pay per day for each day of unused ALD over and above the maximum accumulation of 90 days at the conclusion of any contract year in which this occurs.

All unused leave days shall be forfeited when an employee leaves the Houston R-I School District. An employee who retires from the Houston R-I School District shall be compensated for all unused leave days (a maximum of 90 days) at a rate of 50 percent of the current substitute pay. Employees who submit their retirement resignation letter prior to the regular Board meeting in January will be compensated at a rate of 80 percent of the current regular substitute pay or employees who submit their retirement resignation prior to the regular Board meeting in February will be compensated at a rate of 70 percent of the current regular substitute pay instead of the 50 percent.

An employee will only be compensated for unused leave once. If an employee retires from the district and returns in a part-time or other capacity, that employee will not be compensated for unused leave once the employee finally leaves the district.

Leave - Support Staff (Policy GDBDA)

The following leaves with pay will be provided to full-time support staff employees. Part-time support staff employees will receive these leaves on a pro rata basis:

Annual Leave Days – Annual leave days (ALD) are available to full-time staff employees to provide greater flexibility in the use of their time off. Support staff employees whose assignments call for 12 months of full-time employment will receive 14 days of leave. Support staff employees whose assignments call for full-time employment only during the regular school term will receive 12 days of leave per fiscal year. Each employee shall have his or her current and cumulative ALD's available beginning on his or her first working day of each school year or employment contract. Unused ALD's will be cumulative to 90 days. Any absence up to four hours shall be counted as a half-day of ALD.

Annual leave days shall be earned over the full term of employment. Therefore, employees working less than a full term (new hires or terminations) shall receive a prorated share of the ALDs based on length of employment during the current school year compared to a full term of employment.

For employees terminating employment, adjustments will be made in the final payroll check. Any employees receiving an overpayment shall reimburse the district within 30 days of termination.

Absences may be charged against ALD's for the following reasons:

a. Illness, injury or incapacity of the employee. The Board reserves the right to require a healthcare provider's certification attesting to the illness or incapacity of the claimant and/or inclusive dates of the employee's incapacitation. FMLA health certification procedures apply to FMLA-qualifying absences, even if such absences are paid ALD.

b. Illness, injury or incapacity of a member of the immediate family. The Board defines "immediate family" to include:

- ▶ The employee's spouse.

▶ The following relatives of the employee or the employee's spouse: parents, children, children's spouses, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings and any other person living with or wholly dependent upon such employee.

▶ Any other person over whom the employee has legal guardianship or for whom the employee has power of attorney and is the primary caregiver.

(Note: "Family" for FMLA purposes is more limited.)

- c. Pregnancy, childbirth and adoption leave in accordance with this policy.
- d. Tax investigation.
- e. Court appearances, unless applicable law or policy provides for paid leave.
- f. Wedding, graduation or funeral.
- g. Observance of a religious holiday.
- h. Conducting personal business of such a nature that it cannot be performed on a Saturday, Sunday or before or after school hours, including parent-teacher conferences. This also includes medical or dental appointments.
- i. Absences under leaves authorized by law, policy or the Board that would otherwise be unpaid including, but not limited to, leave under the FMLA.
- j. Staff members who are ill are encouraged to stay home to promote healing and reduce the risk of infecting others, especially during a pandemic or other significant health event. In the event of a pandemic or other significant health event, schools may be closed to all staff and students or just students. If schools are closed only to students, staff members are expected to work regular schedules or use appropriate leave.
- k. Other personal situations approved by the superintendent or designee.

Guidelines for ALD Use

1. A district employee may not use ALD's during the period the employee receives Workers' Compensation for time lost to work-related incidents.
2. Any support staff employee who is a member of a retirement system shall remain a member during any period of leave under ALD provisions of the district or under Workers' Compensation. The employee shall also receive creditable service credit for such leave time if the employee makes contributions to the system equal to the amount of contributions that he or she would have made had he or she been on active service status.
3. ALD's must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance, whenever possible, and must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor except for unexpected illness, emergencies or unusual circumstances. However, 30 days' notice is required by law if the leave qualifies as FMLA leave and such notice is practical. Employees must also comply with established procedures for notification of absence and arrangements for substitute coverage. Employees who are unexpectedly absent and provide proper notification to obtain a substitute, but are unable to receive prior approval by his or her supervisor may be

subject to denial of ALD use and/or disciplinary action if the absence does not fall within one of the above exceptions. The use of ALD may be limited based on substitute availability.

4. Paid ALD's are considered time worked for benefit purposes, but they shall not be considered as hours worked for overtime purposes.

5. In the event of an employee's death, all accrued ALD shall be paid to the designated beneficiary at the current daily rate of pay for a substitute.

6. Requests for advances on unearned ALD's shall not be permitted.

7. Paid ALD's shall not be used on the following days, except for extenuating circumstances with special permission from the superintendent. The school must be able to secure a substitute before leave will be approved:

- a. Before or after a holiday.
- b. Early release days or when an in-service is scheduled.
- c. First and last two weeks of school.

8. An employee who is absent for reasons other than those specified under Board rules, or by reason of fraudulent application of district leave provisions, shall be subject to disciplinary action that may include pay reduction, and other sanctions, up to and including termination of employment.

ALD Reimbursement – All employees will be reimbursed at the current rate of substitute pay per day for each day of unused ALD over and above the maximum accumulation of 90 days at the conclusion of any contract year in which this occurs.

All unused leave days shall be forfeited when an employee leaves the Houston R-I School District. An employee who retires from the Houston R-I School District shall be compensated for all unused leave days (a maximum of 90 days) at a rate of 50 percent of the current substitute pay.

An employee will only be compensated for unused leave once. If an employee retires from the district and returns in a part-time or other capacity, that employee will not be compensated for unused leave once the employee finally leaves the district.

Vacation -- All support staff employed on a 12-month basis will receive two (2) weeks of vacation per year for the first ten (10) years of service in the district. During 11-20 years of service in the district, 12-month employees will receive three (3) weeks of vacation and 21 years of service and above will receive four (4) weeks of vacation. All vacation days carried over from the previous fiscal year must be used by August 1 of each succeeding year. An employee must submit a written request for vacation to his or her supervisor and receive written authorization before taking vacation days. If the employee's absence may disrupt district operations, the supervisor has the discretion to deny a request for vacation or to limit the time of year the employee may take his or her vacation.

Bereavement Leave – When a death occurs in an employee's immediate family, employees may take up to five (5) days off with pay to attend the funeral or make funeral arrangements. The district may require verification of the need for the leave. The Board defines "immediate family" to include spouse, parents, children, children's spouses, grandparents, grandchildren and siblings of an employee or employee's spouse, and any other family member residing with the employee. After the exhaustion of the five (5) days of bereavement leave, the employee may use personal leave.

Professional Leave – Employees may be granted professional leave to attend classes or conferences, meet with mentors or participate in other approved professional growth activities. Professional leave must be approved by the immediate supervisor, arranged well in advance and is not considered personal leave. Attending meetings of organizations that engage in or support collective bargaining is not considered a professional growth activity.

Military Leave -- The Board shall grant military leave as required by law.

Jury Duty Leave -- An employee will be granted paid leave for time spent responding to a summons for jury duty, time spent participating in the jury selection process or time spent actually serving on a jury. An employee will not be terminated, disciplined, threatened or otherwise subjected to adverse action because of the employee's receipt of or response to a jury summons.

Family and Medical Leave ([Policy GDBDA](#))

Leave that qualifies for Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) protection will be administered in accordance with federal law. To be eligible for FMLA leave benefits, the employee must have been employed in the district for at least 12 months and have been employed for at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period immediately preceding the leave, be employed at a worksite where 50 or more employees are employed by the district within 75 miles of that worksite, and provide the district at least a 30-day notice of any expected absence for foreseeable circumstances, if practical.

Memorials ([Policy FFA](#))

The Houston R-I School District Board of Education recognizes that the loss of a member of the school community is deeply felt, and that on occasion it may be desirable to remember a deceased individual by establishing a memorial. All memorials must be approved by the superintendent and building-level administration before being placed within a school building or on school grounds. To avoid unnecessary expense and possible disappointment, the district recommends that individuals refrain from purchasing any type of memorial until it is approved by the administration.

Overtime Compensation (Comp Time) ([Policy GDBB](#))

Nonexempt employees include all district employees not specifically identified as exempt under federal law. This generally includes non-certificated staff; however, in some circumstances non-certificated staff members may qualify for exempt status. Hours worked means all hours during which the individual is required to be on duty—generally from the required starting time to normal quitting time—and all hours an employee is permitted to work. Meal periods and break periods of 20 minutes or longer do not count as hours worked unless the individual performs work during the meal period. *If a nonexempt employee has accumulated 20 or more hours of comp time, this time must be used prior to taking leave days.*

Comp time must be approved by the supervisor. Employees should not report to work early or stay late unless authorized by a supervisor. Unauthorized overtime could result in nonpayment. The board discourages overtime work by nonexempt employees. *The district uses comp time in lieu of overtime.*

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees

Support employees 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. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees are not exempt from overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor.

Part-Time and Substitutes

At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall have prepared a list of properly qualified persons to serve as temporary substitute teachers. Part-Time teachers and substitutes are required to meet background checks and screenings required of full time teachers in the district as well as substitute certification through DESE.

The Board considers part-time and substitute support employees in the areas of support services as an integral and essential part of the school system. These employees play a very important role in a continuous program of quality instruction.

Teachers should contact their building principal in advance when it is known that they are going to miss a day of school. The principal will arrange for a substitute. Teacher preference for a substitute will be considered when possible.

Support staff should contact their immediate supervisor when a substitute is needed.

Paychecks

All employees are paid monthly. Paychecks will be direct deposited on the 20th of every month. If payday falls on a weekend, checks will be deposited on the preceding Friday. All employees will receive their pay statement electronically via email and WebLink.

Beginning the 2025-2026 school year, state grant compensation will be equally distributed throughout a twelve month period. In previous years, these amounts were distributed in (2) lump sum payments (December and May).

Performance Evaluation ([Policies GCN, GDN](#))

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continual process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria.

To assure high quality professional staff performance and to advance the instructional programs of the district the Board will require a program of comprehensive, performance-based evaluations for each professional staff member it employs (NEE). The evaluation shall be ongoing and of sufficient specificity and frequency to provide for demonstrated standards of competency and academic ability.

The development of a strong, competent support staff and the maintenance of high morale among the staff are major objectives of the Board of Education. All employees will be given an explanation of duties and responsibilities and will be provided guidance by their immediate supervisors in performing them satisfactorily. All supervisors and/or principals will complete a written evaluation on all support staff under their supervision.

Personnel Records

It is the intent of the Board of Education to maintain complete and current personnel files, including all information necessary to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act, for all district employees.

The file of an individual employee will be considered confidential information and a closed record, to the extent allowed by the law, and will only be available to authorized administrative personnel and to the employee. Individually identifiable personnel records, performance ratings or records pertaining to employees or applicants for employment are closed records under the Missouri Sunshine Law to the extent allowed by law. Pursuant to state law, the names, positions, salaries and lengths of service of all employees are public information and must be released upon request. In accordance with federal law, the district shall release to parents, upon request, information regarding the professional qualifications and degrees of teachers and the qualifications of paraprofessionals who are employed by a school receiving Title I funds and who provide instruction to their child at that school.

Professional Dress Code

It is the responsibility of all employees to project a positive image. Every employee is expected to present a neat, well-groomed appearance during working hours. They should wear no apparel that distracts students from the learning process or that creates disruption in the classroom..

Purchasing Procedures ([Policy DJF](#))

No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the District can be made without proper authorization. The District may choose not to reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Contact your immediate supervisor for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Reassignments/Reduction in Workforce ([Policy GCI, GDI](#))

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employee's contract. When reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or programs changes, the Superintendent has final placement authority. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time. The transfer of staff members from one building to another can provide opportunities for professional growth, increase effectiveness of personnel, the challenge of a new position and stimulation through changed surroundings. For these reasons, staff members should feel free to request transfers within the School District. Staff members may need to be reassigned to another position in the District in order to meet the needs of the School District. The most common needs occur when enrollment patterns change either by school attendance areas or by course offering and there are excess staff members at a school needing to be reassigned elsewhere.

The Board of Education may place as many teachers on unrequested leave of absence as may be necessary due to decrease in pupil enrollment, school district reorganization or the financial condition of the school district.

Whenever it becomes necessary because of lack of funds, lack of work or in the interest of economy, the Board of Education may reduce the number of non-instructional personnel.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse ([Policy JHG](#))

The Board of Education requires its staff members to comply with the state child abuse and neglect laws and the mandatory reporting of suspected neglect and/or abuse. Any school official or employee acting in his or her official capacity who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or who observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, will immediately make a report to the building principal or his or her designee, including any report of excessive absences that may indicate educational neglect. The principal or designee will then become responsible for making a report via the Child Abuse Hotline to

CD, as required by law. This policy does not preclude any employee from directly reporting abuse or neglect to CD. However, the school official or employee must notify the building principal or designee immediately after making a report.

Resignation of Professional Staff Members (Policy GCPB)

The district encourages teachers to notify the superintendent as soon as the teacher decides not to return or not to accept another contract with the district. Resignations become effective at the end of the school year in which they are submitted unless the district is notified otherwise.

A tenured teacher has a binding contract with the district for the next school year if the teacher does not notify the district of his or her resignation in writing by June 1, or at the time a new contract is executed with the district if executed prior to June 1. A probationary teacher has a binding contract with the district once the teacher and the Board have executed a contract.

Once under contract, only the Board has the authority to release the teacher from a contract. The Board considers serious illness, transfer of spouse and military service legitimate reasons for resignation of professional staff. However, the Board will consider each resignation on an individual basis. The Board may choose not to release an employee from a contract if a suitable replacement cannot be found.

When a professional staff member is released from his or her contract, he or she will be charged damages to cover the cost of filling the vacancy created. Advertising costs, administrative costs and the time and effort involved in screening applicants, setting up and conducting interviews, and making reference calls are all reasonable factors considered in establishing the cost of filling a position. Since filling positions becomes increasingly more difficult later in the year, the Board has established the following graduated scale for accepting resignations:

1. Between the last day of school and May 31.....\$500
2. June 1 through June 30.....\$1000
3. After July 1.....\$1500

Support Staff Resignations

Any support staff member who desires to resign must submit a written letter of resignation to his or her immediate supervisor. The letter should specify when the resignation is to be effective and should be submitted at least two (2) weeks prior to the effective date. A resignation is final upon submission and cannot be withdrawn unless authorized by the supervisor to whom it was submitted. The resignation need not be approved by the Board.

Retirement (Policy GCPC)

All staff members who qualify shall be participants in the Public School Retirement System (PSRS) or the Public Education Employee’s Retirement System (PEERS) of the State of Missouri. Employees who plan to retire under PSRS/PEERS should notify their supervisor and central office as soon as possible. Inquiries should be addressed to: Teacher (Non-Teacher) Retirement System of Missouri, P. O. Box 268, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102 or call 1 (800) 392-6848 or 1 (573) 634-5290. You may also email memberservices@psrsmo.org.

Safety (Policies EB, GBE)

The Board recognizes the necessity for a planned safety program to create a safe environment for the students attending, and for the professional and support staff employed by the school district. The maintenance of healthful and safe conditions throughout the school district is a responsibility shared by the Board, superintendent and all professional and support staff.

Every attempt will be made to meet safety and health standards established by state and federal laws and regulations. The cooperation of school, home and community in providing a safe and healthful environment is encouraged by the Board.

Safe practices will be a scheduled part of instruction in the classrooms, laboratories and school shops. Proper supervision of students and other citizens using the school facilities will be required. Hazardous conditions indicated by inspectors will be reported to the Board and corrected. Each building administrator will develop and implement a safety program, report hazardous conditions to the superintendent and hold employees and students responsible for the observance of all safety rules and procedures.

The district will fully utilize federal, state and local violence prevention programs and resources available to students, teachers or staff that the district determines are necessary and cost effective for the school district.

Faculty and staff are expected to assist in ensuring that safety procedures are posted in all appropriate areas. All employees should be familiar with the evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas. Fire, tornado, and other emergency drills will be conducted to familiarize employees and students with evacuation procedures. Fire extinguishers are located throughout all District buildings. Employees should know the location of the extinguishers nearest their place of work and how to use them. Any questions regarding safety concerns or procedures should be directed to district safety coordinator Mr. Shane Pitts or Mr. Eric Sloan.

School Closings

It is occasionally necessary to close school due to inclement weather or other emergencies. In the event that school is closed employees will be contacted via School Messenger notifications. Closings will also be reported to the Springfield School Closing Network, Houston R-I social media platforms, Houston Herald newspaper, and local radio stations.

Seclusion and Restraint ([Policy JAGGA](#))

Board policy JGGA establishes guidelines, expectations, and restrictions for the use of seclusion and restraint by school personnel. Staff members should familiarize themselves with the contents of this policy. Selected individuals, including administrators, special education personnel, and others have received specialized training in the use of seclusion and restraint. On the very rare occasions when seclusion and/or restraint are appropriate, it should only be applied by trained personnel.

Sexual Harassment ([Policy AC](#))

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

1. Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment.
 1. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment
 2. decisions.
2. The conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an
3. 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.

Sexual Harassment/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. Other prohibited conduct includes the following:

1. Engaging in sexually oriented conversations for the purpose of personal sexual gratification.
2. Telephoning students at home or elsewhere and engaging in inappropriate social relationships.
3. Engaging in physical contact that would reasonably be construed as sexual in nature.
4. Enticing or threatening students to get them to engage in sexual behavior in exchange for grades or other school-related benefits.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

In most instances, sexual abuse of a student by an employee violates a student's constitutional right to bodily integrity. Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to, fondling, sexual assault, or sexual intercourse.

Employees who suspect a student is being sexually harassed or abused by another employee are obligated to report their concerns to the Building Principal. All allegations of sexual harassment or sexual abuse of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. Conduct that may be characterized as known or suspected child abuse will also be reported to the appropriate authorities, as required by law.

Staff Development ([Policy GCL, GCLB, GDL](#))

Professional Development is a high value of the Board of Education for its personnel and is committed to providing systematic professional development for the district's professional educators. The Board of Education supports a Professional Development Committee (PDC) which will assist with the planning and implementation of professional development activities. Collaborative activities are highly valued as quality professional development in the Houston district.

Training and development opportunities for non-instructional employees are essential to the efficient and economical operation of the schools. Non-instructional employees are encouraged to grow in job skills and to take additional training that will improve skills on the job.

Suicide Awareness and Prevention ([Policy JHDF](#))

Suicide is a leading cause of death among youths in Missouri and is a public health concern impacting all Missouri citizens. The district is committed to maintaining a safe environment to protect the health, safety, and welfare of students.

This policy outlines key protocols and procedures the district will use to raise awareness of suicide and the steps that can be taken to prevent it. The goal of the district is to help students, including students receiving their education virtually, who may be at risk of suicide without stigmatizing students or excluding them from school. The board will provide the resources necessary to meet this goal. No student will be excluded from school based solely on the district's belief that the student is at risk of suicide.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

At their own expense, employees can enroll in supplemental insurance programs during open enrollment. Premiums for these programs are required to be paid through payroll deduction and are subject to Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) requirements.

Teaching About Religion ([Policy IGAC](#))

Pursuant to state and federal law, the Houston R-I School District may teach about religion but may not promote any particular religion or religious belief. No course or portion of any course taught in the district will have the primary purpose or effect of illegally advancing or inhibiting religion.

Tobacco Use (Policy AH)

The Houston R-I District is smoke-free in and on all school district property. All persons are expected to refrain from the use of tobacco in any form while in and/or on school property. This includes all school and non-school events held on school property.

Travel Expense Reimbursement (Policy DLC)

The district shall attempt to reimburse employees for travel and related expenses incurred in connection with District business. The employee will not suffer, nor gain financially as a result of such travel or expense. Meetings and out-of-town conventions and meetings for the purpose of conducting school business shall be approved in advance by the appropriate department or school administrator.

The travel and expense reimbursements must be completed through the purchase order process (online). A link can be found on the District website. The form must be completed fully within 3 months of the travel/expense occurring. Employees must possess a valid driver's license in order to utilize a personal vehicle for school business travel. Employees using their personal vehicle for business will be required to maintain liability insurance consistent with state law. Employees transporting students must seek approval from their building administrator. Mileage will be paid at a rate of \$0.50 per mile; however, this amount will be assessed bi-annually and may change throughout the year.

Reimbursement is allowed for meal expenses, not to exceed \$25.00 per day for three meals. Reimbursement for any one meal should not exceed \$25.00. Detailed receipts are required for all meals or other expense reimbursements. Meals are reimbursable only when they are a part of a meeting or activity where District business is discussed and individuals from outside the District are present.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance

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

Unused Sick Leave

All employees will be reimbursed at the current rate of substitute pay per day for each day of unused ALD over and above the maximum accumulation of 90 days at the conclusion of any contract year in which this occurs.

All unused paid leave days shall be forfeited when a teacher leaves the Houston R-I School District. A teacher who retires from the Houston R-I School shall be compensated for all unused paid leave days (a maximum of 90 days) at a rate of 50 percent of the current substitute pay. Teachers who submit their retirement resignation letter prior to the regular Board meeting in January will be compensated at a rate of 80 percent of the current regular substitute pay or teachers who submit their retirement resignation prior to the regular Board meeting in February will be compensated at a rate of 70 percent of the current regular substitute pay instead of the 50 percent. An employee will only be compensated for unused paid leave once. If an employee retires from the district and returns in a part-time or other capacity, that employee will not be compensated for unused paid leave once the employee finally leaves the district.

Any employee who resigns from the district will only be compensated for paid leave days accumulated beyond 90 days.

Visitors in the Workplace ([Policy KK](#))

All visitors are expected to enter any District facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the District premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge. Regular visits by family and friends during working hours are not appropriate.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

The District, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case. All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the employee's immediate supervisor and to Mrs. Rachel Fishel in the Central Office.

Employee Handbook Receipt

Name (Print) _____ Date _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of or access to the Houston R-I School District Employee Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document. I understand that this document may only contain portions of the Board of Education policy. All policies should be accessed from the district website as this will be the most updated version of district policies.

Staff Signature