Athens Independent School District

Professional/Paraprofessional Employee Handbook

2024-2025

Athens Independent School District
104 Hawn Street
Athens, Texas 75751
903-677-6900
Fax: 903-677-6908

The information in this handbook is subject to change. Changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or eliminate the information summarized in this booklet. As the district provides updated policy information, the employee is responsible for reading and abiding by the changes. The employee understands that no modifications to contractual relationships or alternations of at-will relationships are intended by this handbook. If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of a disability, or need this document translated, please email gmorrison@athensisd.net.

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Employee Handbook Receipt

Reference Only

Please review this form; however, an electronic form will be sent to you via Frontline for acknowledgement of reading the Athens ISD Employee Handbook.

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

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

Please indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box below:

❒ I choose to receive the employee handbook in electronic format and accept responsibility for accessing it according to the instructions provided.

❒ I choose to receive a hard copy of the employee handbook and understand I am required to contact ewalker@athensisd.net to obtain a hard copy.

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 document. As the district provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes

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

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

_____ _____

Signature Date

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all district policies and procedures are included. Those that are, have been summarized. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to the Human Resource Office.

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

District Information

Description of Athens Independent School District

Athens Independent School District encompasses 210 Square miles of Henderson County and serves approximately 3,009 students in their pursuit of a quality public education.

Student Ethnic Distribution:

African American…….12.64%
Hispanic……. 51.10%
White……30.32%
Other……5.94%
(American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Multi-Racial)

District Accreditation Status:

Accredited

Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives
Policy AE

Mission Statement

Athens ISD will create an environment where all students are given the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive, successful citizens.

Purpose

The purpose of the district is to graduate every student on time, college and work ready.

Vision Statement

Igniting Potential – Inspiring Success

Core Beliefs

- Our business is teaching and learning.
- We believe that all children can learn at or above grade level.
- We believe that it is important to have high expectations so that all children reach their learning potential.
- We believe that our schools have an important and profound impact of every child's life.
- We believe that the school's involvement is one that should demonstrate and promote respect for students, parents, teachers and all school stakeholders.
- We believe that we have the responsibility to build good citizens for Athens, Henderson County and our state.

Board of Trustee Goals

- Expect and achieve academic excellence at every campus for all students.
- Attract, retain and develop exemplary employees for all jobs in the district.
- Develop/expand programs and services that promote parent/community satisfaction.
- Promote participation in school-sponsored extra/co-curricular activities.
- Provide for all operations in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible.

Board of Trustees

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

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

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

Current board members include:

- Alicea Elliott, President
- Eugene Buford, Vice President

- Freddie Paul, Secretary
- Margaret Richardson
- Kelley Lee
- Tilo Galvan
- Gina Hunter

The board usually meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. The meetings take place in the Board Room of the District Administration Building, located at 104 Hawn Street, Athens, Texas. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district website, www.athensisd.net and on the front door of the District Administration Building at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a one-hour notice.

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

Board Meeting Schedule

July 22, 2024

August 26, 2024

September 23, 2024

October 28, 2024

November 18, 2024

December 16, 2024

January 27, 2025

February 24, 2025

March 24, 2025

April 28, 2025

May 19, 2025

June 23, 2025

Campus Administration

Secondary

Athens High School
Grades 9-12
Jason Iglehart, Principal
708 East College
Athens, Texas 75751
903-677-6920

Athens Middle School
Grades 6-8
Amy Guidry, Principal
6800 State Hwy. 19
Athens, Texas 75751
903-677-3030

Elementary

Bel Air Elementary
Grades PreK-5
Lisa Howell, Principal
215 Willowbrook
Athens Texas 75751
903-677-6980

Central Athens Elementary
Grades PreK-5
Claudia Godwin, Principal
307 Madole
Athens Texas 75751
903-677-6960

South Athens Elementary
Grades PreK-5
Nikki Mason, Principal
718 Robbins Road
Athens, Texas 75751
903-677-6970

Helpful Contacts

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

Superintendent of Schools	**Dr. Janie Sims**	
Executive Assistant	Gail Carnes	677-6903
Administrative Assistant	Robin Carpenter	677-6900
Deputy Superintendent	**Ginger Morrison**	
Executive Assistant	Gail Carnes	677-6903
Chief Financial Officer	**Randy Jones**	**677-6937**
Accountant/Payroll	Josey Vaughan	677-6904
Data Analyst / PEIMS	David Alexander	677-6948
Employee Benefits/Insurance/Risk Mgmt/Payroll	Jackie Hodges	677-6929
Bookkeeper	Patsy Teasdale	677-6958
Administrative Assistant	Robin Carpenter	677-6900
Director of Student Programs	**Cathy Kirkland**	**677-6933**
Administrative Assistant	Robin Carpenter	677-6900
Director of Curriculum & Instruction	**Nicole Cornish**	**677-6947**
Administrative Assistant	Robin Carpenter	677-6900
Communications Coordinator	**Toni Clay**	**677-6900 x6954**
Administrative Assistant	Robin Carpenter	677-6900
Human Resources Coordinator	**Erica Walker**	**677-6931**
Administrative Assistant	Robin Carpenter	677-6900
Executive Director of Special Programs	**Brooke Brock**	**677-6949**
Secretary	Jennifer Gallaher	677-6907

Director of Special Populations	**Lindsay Conner**	**677-6953**
Secretary	Jennifer Gallaher	677-6907
School Psychologist - CAE/SAE/AMS	Jessica Clark	x6918
School Psychologist - BAE/SAE/AHS	Mihaela Mateescu	x6936
Speech Pathologist - CAE/SAE/AMS	Heather Cain	x6984
Speech Pathologist - BAE/AHS	Taylor Herrera	x6988
Lead & Bilingual Educational Diagnostician	Veronica Melendez	x6995
Educational Diagnostician - BAE	Juli Jones	x6993
Educational Diagnostician - CAE	Cristi Smith	x6932
Bilingual Educational Diagnostician - CAE/AHS-9th	Elsa Cruz	x6996
Educational Diagnostician - SAE	Andrea Holland	x6505
Educational Diagnostician - AMS-7th-8th	Lana McGonagill	x6310
Educational Diagnostician - AHS-10th-12th	Sarah Davidson	x6997
Bilingual ARD Facilitator - BAE/AMS-6th	Virginia Miranda	x6936
ARD Facilitator – SAE	Shaunda Miles	x6989
Occupational Therapist	Michele Lee	x6908
Physical Therapist	Susie Runte	

Director of Technology	**Tony Brooks**	**677-6951**
Administrative Assistant	Robin Carpenter	677-6900
Network Administrator	Oliver Hennen	DSC x6961
PC Support Technician	Josh Emsoff	DSC x6959
PC Support Technician	Mark Scotchmer	DSC x6311
PC Support Technician	Joshua Webb	DSC x6312

Executive Director of Maintenance & Operations	**Barry Choate**	**677-6911**
Administrative Assistant	Robin Carpenter	677-6900
Transportation Supervisor	David Glover	**677-6912**
Secretary (Transportation)	Basha Cox	677-6952
Child Nutrition Representative (TAHER)	Aimme Barina	**677-6914**
Secretary (Child Nutrition) / Federal Applications	Jinnifer Pauley	677-6930

Athletic Director / Head Football Coach	**Zac Harrell**	**677-6992 x6232**
Secretary	Dorothy Bundy	677-6992 x6233

Calendar

Athens INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

2024 - 2025
ATHENS ISD SCHOOL CALENDAR

NO SCHOOL DAYS / OFFICES CLOSED

July
4 Holiday
26, 29-31 Staff Development

August
1-2 Staff Development
5 First Day of School

September
2 Labor Day Holiday
6 Staff Development

October
3 End 1st Nine Weeks
7 Begin 2nd Nine Weeks

November
1 Staff Development
25-29 Thanksgiving Holidays

December
6 Staff Development
19 End of 2nd Nine Weeks
20-31 Christmas Holidays

January
1-3 Holiday
6 Staff Development
7 Begin 3rd Nine Weeks
20 MLK Holiday

February
7 Staff Development

March
7 Staff Development
13 End of 3rd Nine Weeks
17-21 Spring Break
24 Begin 4th Nine Weeks

April
4 Staff Development

May
26 Memorial Day Holiday
29 End of 4th Nine Weeks
30 Work Day / Graduation

July 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

September 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

May 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Staff Development / Work Days
Holidays
NO SCHOOL

Testing Days
Begin 9 Weeks
End 9 Weeks

* Calendar Subject to Change *

Board Approved
2/26/2024

Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity

Policies DAA, DIA

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Athens ISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Additionally, the district does not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to a discriminatory employment practice. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not discriminate on the basis of sex and is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The prohibition against discrimination extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the district's Title IX coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the Title IX coordinator for employees to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment: Ginger Morrison, Deputy Superintendent, 903-677-6903. Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, email, or phone. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator for employees for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: Dr. Janie Sims, Superintendent, 903-677-6900.

Questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any other reason should also be directed to the superintendent.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Policy DC

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the district's website. Vacancies may also be posted at university placement centers, regional service centers and on the Internet. A link to the postings can be found on the district's web site at www.athensisd.net under the 'Employment' link.

Employment after Retirement
Policy DC

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

Contract and Non-Contract Employment
Policy DC series

State law requires the district to employ all full-time professional employees in positions requiring a certificate from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and nurses under probationary, term, or continuing contracts. Employees in all other positions are employed at will or by a contract that is not subject to the procedures for nonrenewal or termination under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. The paragraphs that follow provide a general description of the employment arrangements used by the district.

Probationary Contracts. Nurses and full-time professional employees new to the district and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive a probationary contract during their first year of employment. Former employees who are hired after a two-year lapse in district employment or employees who move to a position requiring a new class of certification may also be employed by probationary contract. Athens ISD is a District of Innovation which allows the district the flexibility to extend the time period of probationary contracts for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years.

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

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

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

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

Certification and Licenses
Policies DBA, DF

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or a professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to the human resource office in a timely manner. Employees licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR) must notify the human resource office when there is action against, or revocation of, their license.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without Chapter 21 due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact the human resource office if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

Recertification of Employment Authorization
Policy DC

At the time of hire all employees must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) and present documents to verify identity and employment authorization.

Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact the human resource office if you have any questions regarding recertification of employment authorization. Failure to verify employment authorization may result in termination.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing
Policy CQ, DHE

Non-investigatory searches in the workplace including accessing an employee's desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable. Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no legitimate expectation of privacy in those places. In addition, the district reserves

the right to conduct searches when there is reasonable cause to believe a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct. Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The district may search the employee, the employee's personal items, and work areas including district-owned technology resources, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work sites or used in district business. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may result if an employee refuses to submit to testing or is found to violate district policy.

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

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug testing policies and related educational material should contact the maintenance and operations office at 903-677-6910.

Health Safety Training

Policies DBA, DMA

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for student must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to Zac Harrell, Athletic Director, by the end of the first nine weeks of the school year.

School nurses and employees with regular contact with students must complete a Texas Education Agency approved, online training regarding seizure disorder awareness, recognition, and related first aid.

Reassignments and Transfers

Policy DK

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

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. A teacher requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit his or her request by May 1st of each year. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the human resource office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

Workload and Work Schedules

Policies DEAB, DK, DL

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

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

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees. Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor and the human resource office. See Overtime Compensation for additional information.

Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk
Policies DEAB, DG

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

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

The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections of Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP ACT) requires an employee to notify the district if they believe the district is out of compliance in providing breaks for a nursing mother. The employee must give the district 10 days to come into compliance before making any claim of liability against the district. An employee with concerns should contact Ginger Morrison, Deputy Superintendent, 903-677-6903.

Pregnant Workers Fairness Act: The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) provides consideration of accommodations to employees who have known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. An employee seeking a PWFA accommodation should contact Erica Walker, Human Resource Coordinator, 903-677-6931.

Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications
Policies DK, DBA

In schools receiving Title I funds, the district is required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. ESSA also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned or taught for four or more

consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements.

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notice under ESSA is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call the human resource office at 903-292-4373.

Outside Employment and Tutoring
Policy DBD

Employees are required to disclose in writing to their immediate supervisor any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of the district. Supervisors will consider outside employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

Performance Evaluation
Policy DN series

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continuous process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually. Written evaluations will be completed on forms approved by the district. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda also can be used to document performance information. All employees will receive a copy of their written evaluation, participate in a performance conference with their supervisor, and have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

Upon receiving a report, a nursing review committee may review a nurse's nursing services, qualifications, and quality of patient care, as well as the merits of a complaint concerning a nurse, and a determination or recommendation regarding a complaint. A nurse may request, orally or in writing, a determination by the committee regarding conduct requested of the nurse believed to violate the nurse's duty to a patient.

Employee Involvement
Policies BQA, BQB

At both the campus and district levels, Athens ISD offers opportunities for input in matters that

affect employees and influence the instructional effectiveness of the district. As part of the district's planning and decision-making process, employees are elected to serve on district- or campus-level advisory committees. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision making process are available in each campus office or from the federal programs office.

Staff Development
Policy DMA

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

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

Compensation and Benefits

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends
Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB

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

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

Employees should contact the human resource office for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

Paychecks

All employees are paid semi-monthly. Employees working under a 12-month (199 days) contract will be issued the first check in July. All other employees will be issued the first check in September. Payments are made in twenty-four (24) equal checks. Employees are responsible for regularly reviewing the accuracy of their pay statements.

The schedule of pay dates for the 2024-2025 school year:

ATHENS ISD
PAYROLL CALENDAR
2024-2025
TARGET PAYDAYS: **3RD & 18TH**
IF THE 3RD OR 18TH FALLS ON A WEEKEND OR HOLIDAY,
PAY DAY WILL BE THE PRECEDING SCHEDULED WORK DAY.

PAYDAY	PAY PERIOD STARTS	PAY PERIOD CUTOFF* & ENTRY OF SUBSTITUTES IN SKYWARD
		05/24/2024
07/03/2024	05/25/2024	06/07/2024
07/18/2024	06/08/2024	06/21/2024
08/02/2024	06/22/2024	07/05/2024
08/15/2024	07/06/2024	07/19/2024
09/03/2024	07/20/2024	08/02/2024
09/18/2024	08/03/2024	08/16/2024
10/03/2024	08/17/2024	09/06/2024
10/17/2024	09/07/2024	09/20/2024
11/01/2024	09/21/2024	10/04/2024
11/18/2024	10/05/2024	10/18/2024
12/03/2024	10/19/2024	11/01/2024
12/18/2024	11/02/2024	11/15/2024
01/03/2025	11/16/2024	11/29/2024
01/16/2025	11/30/2024	12/20/2024
02/03/2025	12/21/2024	01/03/2025
02/18/2025	01/04/2025	01/17/2025
03/03/2025	01/18/2025	01/31/2025
03/18/2025	02/01/2025	02/14/2025
04/03/2025	02/15/2025	02/28/2025
04/17/2025	03/01/2025	03/21/2025
05/01/2025	03/22/2025	04/04/2025
05/15/2025	04/05/2025	04/18/2025
06/03/2025	04/19/2025	05/02/2025
06/18/2025	05/03/2025	05/16/2025
07/03/2025	05/17/2025	06/06/2025
07/17/2025	06/07/2025	06/20/2025
08/01/2025	06/21/2025	07/04/2025
08/18/2025	07/05/2025	07/18/2025

*Payroll data is due to the Business Office payroll desk as soon as possible on the next business day.

Automatic Payroll Deposit

Paychecks for all employees will be electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of two weeks is necessary to activate this service. Contact the payroll and benefits office at 903-677-6931 for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Payroll Deductions

Policy CFEA

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

- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) or Social Security employee contributions
- Federal income tax required for all full-time employees
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986)
- Child support and spousal maintenance, if applicable
- Delinquent federal education loan payments, if applicable

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for health, dental, life, and vision insurance; annuities; and higher education savings plans or prepaid tuition programs. Employees also may request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations and certain charitable contributions approved by the board. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Overpayment: Employees are not entitled to any funds the district overpays. An overpayment occurs if an employee is paid more than the amount the employee should have been paid under the assigned pay grade and applicable supplemental pay.

If an overpayment is reported in the current fiscal year, a payment plan will be developed to recoup the payment. Generally, an overpayment will be paid in on pay cycle. However, if this creates an undue hardship for the employee, the district has the discretion to develop a plan for regular payroll deductions in the same fiscal year. An agreement between an employee and the district must be in place in order to deduct any overpayment.

Overtime Compensation

Policies DEAB, DEC

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

action up to and including termination.

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:00 a.m. on Saturday and ends at 11:59 midnight on Friday.

Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours.

Employees shall be compensated for overtime (i.e., hours beyond 40 in a workweek) at time - and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

Policy DEE

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor must give approval. For approved travel, Athens ISD reimburses mileage based on the Texas state mileage reimbursement rate as published by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (67 cents/mile as of January 1, 2024) For overnight travel, a rate per day up to the current state travel reimbursement for meals shall be paid as a per diem meal allowance (currently set by AISD at $40./day). Receipts shall not be required (but are encouraged to be submitted), but confirmation of attendance at the function shall be required. Employees must submit receipts when travel is funded by federal or state grant funds, to be reimbursed for allowable expenses other than mileage. Questions may be addressed to the Business Office.

The following may be used for mileage: the chart below, a print out of MapQuest or Google Map showing mileage to destination. Mileage listed is doubled.

LOCATION	MILEAGE	LOCATION	MILEAGE
Austin	400	Huntsville	300
Brownsboro	30	Jacksonville	80
Carthage	210	Kaufman	88
Cedar Hill	178	Kilgore	130
Chapel Hill	84	Lancaster	168
Commerce	180	Lindale	100
Corsicana	80	Longview	140
Dallas	180	Lufkin	300

Denton	240	Mineola	116
Eustace	30	Murchison	14
Frankston	42	Nacogdoches	190
Fort Worth	240	Palestine	80
Gladewater	120	Paris	240
Grand Saline	80	Salado	300
Greenville	162	San Antonio	570
Henderson	150	Tyler	80
Houston	420	Whitehouse	100

Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

Policy CRD

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

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

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each year or when they experience a qualifying event (e.g., marriage, divorce, birth). Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact the benefits and payroll office at 903-677-6931 for more information.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for cancer, dental, vision, disability, etc. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact Erica Walker, Benefits/Payroll at 903-677-6931 for more information.

Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

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

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

Workers' Compensation Insurance
Policy CRE

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from Deep East Texas Self-Insurance Fund.

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 employees' supervisor. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. See *Workers' Compensation Benefits,* for information on use of paid leave for such absences.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance
Policy CRF

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

Teacher Retirement

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

the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the business office as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web (www.trs.texas.gov).

Leaves and Absences

Policies DEC, DECA, DECB

The district offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence. Employees who expect to be absent for an extended period of more than four days (4) should call human resources for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums, and requirements for communicating with the district.

Leave is available for the employee's use at the beginning of the school year; however, state personal and local leave is earned on a daily basis. If an employee leaves the district before the end of the work year, the cost of any unearned leave days taken shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

Paid leave must be used in ½ day increments. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order:

- Local leave
- State sick leave accumulated before the 1995-96 school year
- State personal days

Employees must follow district and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate form or certification. Any unapproved absences or absences beyond accumulated or available paid leave shall result in deduction from the employee's pay.

If any employee does not report or request leave of absence(s) according to district procedures, the incident is considered a "no call/no show". An employee who is absent for two consecutive days without notice is considered to have abandoned their job and may face disciplinary consequences up to and including termination.

Immediate Family. For purposes of leave other than family and medical leave, immediate family is defined as the following:

- Spouse

- Son or daughter, including a biological, adopted, or foster child, a son- or daughter-in law, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis
- Parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, or other individual who stands in loco parentis to the employee
- Sibling, stepsibling, and sibling-in-law
- Grandparent and grandchild
- Any person residing in the employee's household at the time of illness or death

For purposes of family and medical leave, the definition of family is limited to spouse, parent, son or daughter, and next of kin. The definition of these are found in Policy DECA (LEGAL).

Medical Certification. Any employee, who is absent more than three (3) 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. Any employee who is absent due to personal or family illness on a professional development day may be required to submit medical certifications from a qualified health care provider confirming the illness.

The district may require medical certification due to an employee's questionable pattern of absences or when deemed necessary by the supervisor or superintendent. The district may also request medical certification when an employee requests leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act for the employee's serious health condition, a serious health condition of the employee's spouse, parent, child, or for military caregiver leave.

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

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

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

Personal Leave

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

Nondiscretionary. Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered non-discretionary leave. Reasons for this type of leave allow very little, if any, advance planning. Nondiscretionary may be used in the same manner as state sick leave. Check with your campus administrator as to whom you are to contact when you are going to be absent.

Discretionary. Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor 24 hours in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor. Discretionary personal leave will be subject to the following limitations:

A maximum of five (5) percent of employees per campus will be permitted to take discretionary personal leave at the same time. (This will be rounded off to the next highest number.)

Discretionary leave shall NOT be taken on the following key days:

- day/s immediately preceding or following a holiday
- during the period of administration of STAAR or other pertinent testing
- during the five days immediately preceding the end of a term/semester
- during Professional Development days/Work days and/or day/s immediately preceding or following Professional Development days/Work days.

Duration of Leave. Discretionary use of personal leave shall not exceed two (2) consecutive workdays.

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

State Sick Leave

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

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

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

Local Leave

Athens Independent School District's employees, with the exception of custodial staff and grounds maintenance staff, shall be provided two (2) local days of leave per year. Custodial and grounds maintenance staff shall earn four (4) paid local leave days per school year. This can be accumulated locally; however, it does not transfer to another district should an employee leave the employment of Athens ISD.

Vacation

Policy DED

Each full-time auxiliary employee in a position normally requiring 12 months of service (260 days) shall receive 10 days of paid vacation annually.

Each 12 month employee on 199 days of service shall receive 7 days of paid vacation annually.

An employee who has been employed by the District for less than one year shall earn paid vacation days on a prorated basis.

Paid vacation days shall not accumulate. All earned vacation days shall be taken within the duty year. Use of vacation days *shall* require prior approval from the employee's immediate supervisor and are subject to discretionary prohibited days listed above.

An employee who resigns or is terminated shall not receive pay for unused days of vacation.

Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank

The catastrophic sick leave bank (CSLB) provides emergency sick leave to members who are unable to work due to an unplanned personal (or immediate family) illness, injury or quarantine,

and who have exhausted all of their sick, compensatory, and annual leave balances. The sick leave bank is a benefit to assist employees in dealing with prolonged, severe, or life-threatening conditions that forces them to exhaust state and local leave, as well as any compensatory time and vacation days, and would otherwise result in a loss of income.

The sick leave bank is a collective deposit of *state or local* leave days received from enrolling employees and subsequent contributions from members.

All days deposited in the bank become the property of the sick leave bank and are no longer available for use by the individual employee as accrued leave.

Level of Membership:

In order to establish the sick leave bank, a minimum of 30 employees must elect to become members of the sick leave bank during the first enrollment period.

A minimum of 30 members are required to sustain the sick leave bank. The bank will be dissolved if membership falls below this number.

Bank Administrator:

To ensure confidentiality, the following shall be appointed by the Superintendent as committee members:

- Executive Director of Special Programs
- Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Head Nurse

The Catastrophic Sick Bank Committee shall be responsible for receiving requests, verifying the validity of requests, recommending approval or denial of requests, and communicating the decisions to the member and the departments involved.

Forms:

Forms are available upon request from the human resource office at the administration building. The following forms are available:

- Enrollment Forms
- Request for catastrophic sick leave bank days
- Medical Certification form

Appeals:

Employees who wish to appeal the decision of the catastrophic sick leave administrator must follow the employee grievance process outlined in Policy DGBA.

Reports:

An annual, statistical report showing contributions, usage, and reserve balance will be presented to catastrophic sick leave bank members, the superintendent, and the Board of Trustees.

Eligibility, Donations and Use Of Days

Eligibility:

All full and or part time regular employees are eligible to request establishment of a catastrophic sick leave bank. For purposes of the catastrophic sick leave bank program, a regular employee is defined as an employee who is required to work more than four and one-half months each fiscal year. Days donated and used by part-time employees will be prorated according to their regular work schedules.

Bank Creation/Donations:

To become a member of the catastrophic sick leave bank an employee must contribute one state or local day.

- New employees may enroll in the catastrophic sick leave bank at the time of hire by depositing one state or local day. The district will advance catastrophic sick leave days to a new employee for this purpose.
- Existing employees may enroll in the catastrophic sick leave bank during open enrollment at the beginning or each school year.

Eligible employees who elect not to join the catastrophic sick bank at the first opportunity afforded to them shall not be permitted to join until the subsequent annual open enrollment period.

Use of Days:

If days available in the bank are insufficient to cover requests, days will be awarded on a prorated basis.

Qualifying Conditions

Level 1-Employee and Immediate Family:

Only absences due to the employee's catastrophic illness or injury or catastrophic illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family are covered by the level 1 catastrophic sick leave bank.

Level 2-Employee Only:

Only absences due to the *employee's catastrophic illness* are covered by the level 2 catastrophic sick leave bank.

Catastrophic Illness or Injury Defined:

A catastrophic illness or injury is a severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family that requires the services of a licensed practitioner for a prolonged period of time and that forces the employee to exhaust all leave time earned by that employee and to lose compensation from the district. Such conditions typically require prolonged hospitalization or recovery or are expected to result in disability or death. Conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth shall be considered catastrophic if they meet the requirements of this paragraph.

Request for Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank Days

Level 1-Request for Days:

An employee must submit a written request for the employee or immediate family for catastrophic sick leave bank days to the Assistant Superintendent. A request must be made in a timely manner. The employee will be notified in writing regarding approval or denial of the request.

Level 1-Number of Days Granted:

Leave1 shall be granted in no more than 12-day increments, renewable one time, not to exceed 24 days for the level 1 request.

Level 2-Request for Days:

An employee must submit a written request for the employee only for catastrophic sick leave bank days to the Assistant Superintendent. A request must be made in a timely manner. The employee will be notified in writing regarding approval or denial of the request.

Level 2-Number of Days Granted:

Leave 2 shall be granted in no more than 12-day increments, renewable one time not to exceed 24 days for the level 2 request.

Confidentiality:

Any medical information provided shall remain confidential. The names of all donors will remain confidential.

Certification

Medical Provider:

Medical certification by a health care provider as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act must be submitted with a request for catastrophic sick leave bank days.

Frequency:

Recertification of a medical condition is required when a request is made for additional catastrophic sick leave bank days.

Recertification of a medical condition could be requested at any time during leave.

Second Opinions:

The district reserves the right to request a second opinion to certify the need for leave by a health care provider designated by the district. The district will assume the cost if a second opinion is required.

Miscellaneous

If a member decides to cancel his or her membership in the bank, all days contributed will be forfeited. If, at a later date, this individual wishes to rejoin the bank, he or she may do so during the enrollment period by donating the required number of days.

Membership in the catastrophic sick leave bank ceases on the effective date of an employee's termination. An individual who is rehired is eligible to rejoin the bank by donating the required number of days.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—General Provisions

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

What is FMLA leave?

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides eligible employees with **job-protected leave** for qualifying family and medical reasons.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) enforces the FMLA for most employees. Eligible employees can take **up to 12 workweeks** of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for:

- The birth, adoption or foster placement of a child with you,
- Your serious mental or physical health condition that makes you unable to work,
- To care for your spouse, child or parent with a serious mental or physical health condition, and
- Certain qualifying reasons related to the foreign deployment of your spouse, child or parent who is a military service member.

An eligible employee who is the spouse, child, parent or next of kin of a covered service member with a serious injury or illness ***may*** **take up to 26 workweeks** of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member.

You have the right to use FMLA leave in **one block of time**. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, you may take FMLA leave **intermittently in separate blocks of time, or on a reduced schedule** by working less hours each day or week. Read Fact Sheet #28M(c) for more information.

FMLA leave is ***not* paid leave**, but you may choose, or be required by your employer, to use any employer-provided paid leave if your employer's paid leave policy covers the reason for which you need FMLA leave.

Benefits and Protections

While employees are on FMLA leave, employers must continue health insurance coverage as if the employees were not on leave.

Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to the same job or one nearly identical to it with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

An employer may not interfere with an individual's FMLA rights or retaliate against someone for using or trying to use FMLA leave, opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA, or being involved in any proceeding under or related to the FMLA.

Am I Eligible to Take FMLA Leave

You are an **eligible employee** if *all* of the following apply:

- You work for a covered employer,
- You have worked for your employer at least 12 months,
- You have at least 1,250 hours of service for your employer during the 12 months before your leave, and
- Your employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of your work location

Airline flight crew employees have different "hours of service" requirements.

You work for a **covered employer** if **one** of the following applies:

- You work for a private employer that had at least 50 employees during at least 20 workweeks in the current or previous calendar year,
- You work for an elementary or public or private secondary school, or
- You work for a public agency, such as a local, state or federal government agency. Most federal employees are covered by Title II of the FMLA, administered by the Office of Personnel Management

How Do I Request FMLA Leave?

Generally, **to request FMLA leave you *must***:

- Follow your employer's normal policies for requesting leave,
- Give notice at least 30 days before your need for FMLA leave, or
- If advance notice is not possible, give notice as soon as possible.

You **do *not* have to share a medical diagnosis** but must provide enough information to your employer so they can determine whether the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. You ***must* also inform your employer if FMLA leave was previously taken** or approved for the same reason when requesting additional leave.

Your **employer *may* request certification** from a health care provider to verify medical leave and may request certification of a qualifying exigency.

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

State employees may be subject to certain limitations in pursuit of direct lawsuits regarding leave for their own serious health conditions. Most federal and certain congressional employees are also covered by the law but are subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or Congress.

What Does My Employer Need To Do?

Once an employer becomes aware that an employee's need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, the employer must notify the employee if he or she is eligible for FMLA leave and, if eligible, must also provide a notice of rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. If the employee is not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for ineligibility.

Employers must notify its employees if leave will be designated as FMLA leave, and if so, how much leave will be designated as FMLA leave.

Enforcement

If you are eligible for FMLA leave, your employer ***must***:

- Allow you to take job-protected time off work for a qualifying reason,
- Continue your group health plan coverage while you are on leave on the same basis as if you had not taken leave, and
- Allow you to return to the same job, or a virtually identical job with the same pay, benefits and other working conditions, including shift and location, at the end of your leave.

Your **employer *cannot* interfere with your FMLA rights** or threaten or punish you for exercising your rights under the law. For example, your employer cannot retaliate against you for requesting FMLA leave or cooperating with a WHD investigation.

After becoming aware that your need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, your **employer *must* confirm whether you are eligible** or not eligible for FMLA leave. If your employer determines that you are eligible, **your employer *must* notify you in writing**:

- About your FMLA rights and responsibilities, and
- How much of your requested leave, if any, will be FMLA-protected leave.

Where Can I find More Information:

Call **1-866-487-9243** or visit **dol.gov/fmla** to learn more.

If you believe your rights under the FMLA have been violated, you may file a complaint with WHD or file a private lawsuit against your employer in court. **Scan the QR code to learn about our WHD complaint process.**

WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period from July 1 through June 30.

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

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

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

Fitness for Duty. An employee that takes FML due to the employee's own serious health condition shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification from the health

care provider. When leave is taken for the employee's own serious health condition, the certification must address the employee's ability to perform essential job functions. The district shall provide a list of essential job functions (e.g., job description) to the employee with the FML designation notice to share with the health care provider. Fitness for duty is not required when an employee returns to work following leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition; to care for a child following birth, adoption, or foster care placement; or for qualifying exigency leave.

Reinstatement. An employee returning to work at the end of FML will be returned to the same position held when the leave began or to an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

In certain cases, instructional employees desiring to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue on family and medical leave until the end of the semester. The additional time off is not counted against the employee's FML entitlement, and the district will maintain the employees group health insurance and reinstate the employee at the end of the leave according to the procedures outlined in policy (see DECA (LEGAL)).

Failure to Return. If, at the expiration of FML, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the district may require the employee to reimburse the district's share of insurance premiums paid during any portion of FML when the employee was on unpaid leave. If the employee fails to return to work for a reason beyond the employee's control, such as a continuing personal or family serious health condition or a spouse being unexpectedly transferred more than 75 miles from the district, the district may not require the employee to reimburse the district's share of premiums paid.

District Contact. Employees that require FML or have questions should contact the human resource office for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Temporary Disability Leave

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

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. An employee's notification of need for extended absence due to the employee's own medical condition shall be accepted as a request for temporary disability leave. The request must be accompanied by a physician's

statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days.

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

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

Certified employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned if an appropriate position is available. If an appropriate position is not available, the employee may be assigned to another campus, subject to the approval of the campus principal. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, the employee will be reinstated to a position at the original campus at the beginning of the following school year.

Workers' Compensation Benefits

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

An employee receiving workers' compensation wage benefits for a job-related illness or injury may choose to use accumulated sick leave or any other paid leave benefits. An employee choosing to use paid leave will not receive workers' compensation weekly income benefits until all paid leave is exhausted or to the extent that paid leave does not equal the pre-illness or -

injury wage. If the use of paid leave is not elected, then the employee will only receive workers' compensation wage benefits for any absence resulting from a work-related illness or injury, which may not equal his or her pre-illness or -injury wage.

Assault Leave

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An incident involving an assault is a work-related injury and should be immediately reported to the campus principal or immediate supervisor.

An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person non-responsible for purposes of criminal liability.

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. At

the request of an employee, the district will immediately assign the employee to assault leave. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave and must be coordinated with workers' compensation benefits. Upon investigation the district may change the assault leave status and charge leave used against the employee's accrued paid leave. The employee's pay will be deducted if accrued paid leave is not available.

Jury Duty

Policies DEC, DG

The district provides paid leave to employees who are summoned to jury duty including service on a grand jury. The district will not discharge, threaten to discharge, intimidate, or coerce any regular employee because of juror or grand juror service or for the employee's attendance or scheduled attendance in connection with the service in any court in the United States. Employees who report to the court for jury duty may keep any compensation the court provides. An employee should report a summons for jury duty to his or her supervisor as soon as it is received and may be required to provide the district a copy of the summons to document the need for leave.

An employee may be required to report back to work as soon as they are released from jury duty. The supervisor may consider the travel time required and the nature of the individual's position when determining the need to report to work. A copy of the release from jury duty or documentation of time spent at the court may be required.

Compliance with a Subpoena

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

Truancy Court Appearances

An employee who is a parent, guardian of a child, or a court-appointed guardian ad litem of a child who is required to miss work to attend a truancy court hearing may use personal leave or compensatory time for the absence. Employees who do not have paid leave available will be docked for any absence required because of the court appearance.

Religious Observance

The district will reasonably accommodate an employee's request for absence for a religious

holiday or observance. Accommodations such as changes to work schedules or approving a day of absence will be made unless they pose an undue hardship to the district. The employee may use any accumulated personal leave for this purpose. Employees who have exhausted applicable paid leave may be granted an unpaid day of absence.

Military Leave

Paid Leave for Military Service. Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized Urban Search and Rescue Team is entitled to 15 days of paid leave per fiscal year when engaged in authorized training or duty orders by proper authority. An additional seven days of leave per fiscal year are available if called to state active duty in response to a disaster. In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service.

Reemployment after Military Leave. Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. Employees returning to work following military leave should contact the human resource office. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years.

Continuation of Health Insurance. Employees who perform service in the uniformed services may elect to continue their health plan coverage at their own cost for a period not to exceed 24 months. Employees should contact the benefits and payroll office for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Mental Health Leave for Peace Officers

Mental Health Leave: An officer shall be allowed up to 2 days of paid mental health leave per calendar year, subject to the following conditions:

- The leave is approved by the employees supervisor
- Ordered by a mental health professional
- Leave is taken as a result of a traumatic event that occurred while on duty

Paid Quarantine Leave: An officer shall be subject to district policy related to paid quarantine leave.

Leave for Police Officer for Illness or Injury:

Leave benefits are based on Athens Police Department leave policy.

Employee Relations and Communications

Employee Recognition and Appreciation

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities also include teacher of the month luncheons, teacher of the year for secondary and elementary teachers, teacher appreciation week in May and end of the year activities.

District Communications

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

Complaints and Grievances

Policy DGBA

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

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

https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/624?filter=DGBA

Employee Conduct and Welfare

Standards of Conduct
Policy DH

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

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

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines, including intentionally making a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC no later than the seventh day after the superintendent knew of the incident. See *Reports to the Texas Education Agency,* for additional information.

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

Texas Educators' Code of Ethics

Purpose and Scope

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification. (19 TAC 247.1(b))

Enforceable Standards

1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

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

Standard 1.2 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly 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 that are used to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 1.12 The educator shall refrain from the illegal use, 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, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.

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

Standard 2.7 The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding 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 intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;

(ii) the subject matter of the communication;

(iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;

(iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;

(v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and

(vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Faculty Dress Code

Administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals are expected to dress in a professional manner appropriate to their assignment. Professional and paraprofessional employees for all campuses and the central office are to adhere to the following:

- **General Information**:
  - All employees must wear district provided picture identification name badges while at work.
  - Physical education and athletic staff are to wear warm-ups/sweat-pants when entering an AISD building while away from their assignment. When in an instructional setting, the staff will wear professional, business casual clothing.
  - Shoes should be appropriate for the job.
  - Hair for all employees shall be a natural hair color, out of eyes, well-groomed and clean.
- **Permitted:**
  - Men's shirts must be neat, business casual with sleeves and collars.
  - Women's dresses, shirts, blouses should be business casual with sleeves.
  - Women's dresses should be no shorter than the top of the knee.
  - Exposed visible piercing shall be relegated to ears only.
- **Not Permitted:**
  - Tattoos–all tattoos must be covered.
  - Shorts or skorts. (Shorts on designated field trip/days must be knee length.)
  - Low cut garments–appropriate undergarments should be worn and should not be visible.
  - T-shirts with pictures, writing or symbols–except on designated days and within specific guidelines.
  - No leggings or yoga pants without an outer garment that would be acceptable by itself (top no shorter than the top of the knee).
  - Nose rings, eyebrow rings, lip rings, tongue rings, gauges, or earrings worn on other visible parts of the body.
- **Guidelines for Jeans:**
  - Each Thursday is designated as a jean day.

- Jeans must be free from any tears, rips, holes or excessive frays at the hem. No overall jeans.
- An Athens Hornet spirit shirt (hornet t-shirt or a solid maroon shirt without design) ***shall*** be worn when wearing jeans.
- Jeans and an Athens Hornet spirit shirt may be worn on staff-development days. Professional or business casual dress is expected when attending off campus staff-development.

**** Final decisions on the appropriateness of school dress rest with the building administrator. ****

Consequences - ***If a staff member arrives at his/her assignment not properly attired he/she will be asked to change.***

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation
Policies DH, DIA

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees, unpaid interns, student teachers, or students. While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment of other persons including board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. A substantiated charge of harassment will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

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

Any district employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, or believes that another employee has experienced such prohibited conduct, should immediately report the alleged acts. The employee may report the alleged acts to his or her supervisor, the campus principal, the Title IX coordinator, or the superintendent. The district's Title IX coordinator's name and contact information is listed in the Equal Employment Opportunity section of this handbook.

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

DIA (LOCAL) https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/624?filter=DIA

Harassment of Students
Policies DH, DHB, FFG, FFH, FFI

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited.

Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. Any district employee who suspects or receives direct or indirect notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment of a student shall immediately notify the district's Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, or superintendent and take any other steps required by district policy.

All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect occurred must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. See *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*, and *Bullying,* for additional information.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students can be found at the following:

DHB (LEGAL) https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=624&code=DHB#legalTabContent

DF(LEGAL) https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=624&code=DF#legalTabContent

FFH (LOCAL) https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=624&code=FFH#legalTabContent

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse
Policies DG, FFG, GRA

All employees with reasonable cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect, as defined by Texas Family Code §261.001, are required by law to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services (CPS), or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering the facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Alleged abuse or neglect involving a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child (including a teacher) must be reported to CPS.

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

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made online at https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person or administrator to make the report.

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the district is prohibited from taking an adverse employment action against a certified or licensed professional who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

An employee's failure to make the required report may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. The offense of failure to report by a professional may be a state jail felony if it is shown the individual intended to conceal the abuse or neglect. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics.

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

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

Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at www.athensisd.net. As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect following the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

Reporting Crime

Policy DG

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

Scope and Sequence
Policy DG

If a teacher determines that students need more or less time in a specific area to demonstrate proficiency in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for that subject and grade level, the district will not penalize the teacher for not following the district's scope and sequence.

The district may take appropriate action if a teacher does not follow the district's scope and sequence based on documented evidence of a deficiency in classroom instruction. This documentation can be obtained through observation or substantiated and documented third party information.

Technology Resources
Policy CQ

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

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

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

Employees are required to abide by the provisions of the district's acceptable use agreement and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action. Passwords are not to be given to anyone else for Internet access. Sharing passwords can result in the loss of district Internet access.

Employees are responsible for the appropriate care of any resource provided by the district, including electronic devices. Should damage or loss of such resources/devices occur, the employee is responsible for paying damages or replacement cost.

Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the technology department at 903-677-6951.

Personal Use of Electronic Communications
Policy CQ, DH

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

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

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

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment.

- The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, meal times, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct district business.

- The employee shall not use the district's logo or other copyrighted material of the district without express written consent.

- An employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on district business unless the employee first obtains written approval from the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy concerns.

- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies,

administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:

- Confidentiality of student records. [See Policy FL]
- Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law. [See DH (EXHIBIT)]
- Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private email addresses. [See Policy GBA]
- Copyright law [See Policy CY]
- Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system. [See DH (EXHIBIT)]

See *Electronic Communications between Employees, Students, and Parents,* below, for regulations on employee communication with students through electronic media.

Electronic Communications between Employees, Students, and Parents
Policy DH

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the superintendent or a campus principal, may use electronic communications with students who are currently enrolled in the district. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. Electronic communications between all other employees and students who are enrolled in the district are prohibited. Employees are not required to provide students with their personal phone number or email address.

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

- The employee has provided the parent with a copy of this protocol
- The employee and the student have a social relationship outside of school;
- The parent understands that the employee's communications with the student

are excepted from district regulation; and

- The parent is solely responsible for monitoring electronic communications between the employee and the student.

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

- *Electronic communications* means any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes email, text messages, instant messages, and any communication made through an Internet website, including a social media website or a social networking website.

- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*: however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.

- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

An employee who communicates electronically with students shall observe the following:

- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students using any form of electronic communications, including mobile and web applications, that are not provided or accessible by the district unless a specific exception is noted below.

- The employee shall use Remind and/or district email to communicate with students.

- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).

- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page ("professional page") for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee's professional page.

- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social

network site, blog, or similar application at any time.

- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.

- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics including:
    - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
    - Copyright law [Policy CY]
    - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DH]

- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with one or more currently-enrolled students.

- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through email, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

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

- All staff are required to use school email accounts for all electronic communications with parents. Communication about school issues through personal email accounts or text messages are not allowed as they cannot be preserved in accordance with the district's record retention policy.

- An employee shall notify his or supervisor in writing within one business day if a student engages in an improper electronic communication with the employee. The employee should describe the form and content of the electronic communication.

Public Information on Private Devices
Policy DH, GB

Employees should not maintain district information on privately owned devices. Any district information must be forwarded or transferred to the district to be preserved. The

district will take reasonable efforts to obtain public information in compliance with the Public Information Act. Reasonable efforts may include:

- Verbal or written directive
- Remote access to district-owned devices and services

Athens ISD Remind Communication Policy

Purpose of Remind: Remind is now the official messaging platform for Athens ISD. Remind is a messaging system that allows quick messages via text, push notifications, or email and phone calls to members of the Athens ISD community, without revealing personal contact information. As our school and district wide messaging system, Remind will be used to send: any communication that is not sent through the district email system, such as direct teacher communication, extra-curricular information, athletic communication etc.

Administrator expectations: District and school administrators will use Remind to communicate to parents, students and staff. Administrators are expected to reply to Remind messages from their parent community. School administrators/District Administrators are expected to support the training of their own teachers on Remind. School administrators will be able to request message history of a member of their school community from district administrators. School Administrators are expected to set office hours in Remind to reflect their workday.

Teacher expectations: Teachers will use Remind to communicate with parents and/or students. This includes class announcements and 2-way messaging. Teachers are expected to set office hours in Remind to reflect their workday. Remind messages will be used as an artifact for your teacher review cycle to measure family/community engagement.

Parent expectations: Parents can expect to receive messages from the district, school, teachers, and other school staff on Remind. Parents can be expected to contact teachers and school administrators directly on Remind. Parents can choose to opt out of receiving Remind messages. Parents can choose if they would like to receive Remind messages via SMS, in app messages, or by email. Parents should contact the campus office with any questions about Remind.

Student expectations: Students can expect to receive messages from the district, school, teachers, and other school staff on Remind. Students can expect to contact teachers directly on Remind. Students can choose if they would like to receive Remind messages via SMS, in app messages, or by email. Students can Remind to organize communication with student run organizations.

Criminal History Background Checks
Policy DBAA

Employees may be subject to a review of their criminal history record information at any time

during employment. National criminal history checks based on an individual's fingerprints, photo, and other identification will be conducted on certain employees and entered into the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Clearinghouse. This database provides the district and

SBEC with access to an employee's current national criminal history and updates to the employee's subsequent criminal history.

Employee Arrests and Convictions
Policy DH, DHB, DHC

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

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

Moral turpitude includes the following:

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

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

Certified Employees. The superintendent and directors are required to report the misconduct or criminal history of a certified employee or individual applying for certification or permit to TEA Division of Educator Investigations. Information about misconduct or allegations of misconduct of a certified employee obtained by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse that results in termination, resignation, or criminal history (e.g., arrest, indictment, prosecution, conviction, or other disposition by the criminal justice system, including probation and deferred adjudication) will be reported to TEA.

Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:

- Abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor
- Possessed, transferred, sold, or distributed a controlled substance
- Illegally transferred, appropriated, or expended school property or funds
- Attempted by fraudulent means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit to gain employment or additional compensation
- Committed a criminal offense on school property or at a school-sponsored event, or
- Solicited or engaged in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor

Uncertified Employees. Misconduct or criminal history of an uncertified employee also must be reported to TEA. Information about misconduct or the allegations of misconduct obtained by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse that results in termination, resignation, or criminal history (e.g., arrest, indictment, prosecution, conviction, or other disposition by the criminal justice system, including probation and deferred adjudication) will be reported to TEA.

Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:

- Abuse or unlawful act with a student or minor, or
- Involvement in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor

Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention
Policy DH

Athens ISD is committed to maintaining an alcohol- and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working

hours may be dismissed. The district's policy regarding employee drug use may be found at the following link:

DH https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=624&code=DH#legalTabContent

Tobacco and Nicotine Products and E-Cigarette Use
Policies DH, FNCD, GKA

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

Employees are prohibited from possessing or using any type of nicotine product, including nicotine pouches, regardless of whether the product contains tobacco, while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity. Exceptions may be made for smoking cessation products with supervisor approval.

Fraud and Financial Impropriety
Policy CAA

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

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district, except as otherwise permitted by law

or district policy

- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district, except as otherwise permitted by law or district policy
- Inappropriately destroying, removing, or using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by federal, state, or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by law or district policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district
- Failure to comply with requirements imposed by law, the awarding agency, or a pass through entity for state and federal awards

Conflict of Interest
Policy CB, DBD

Employees are required to disclose in writing to the district any situation that creates a potential conflict of interest with proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interests of the district. This includes the following:

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

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

Gifts and Favors
Policy DBD

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

Copyrighted Materials
Policy CY

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

Associations and Political Activities
Policy DGA

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

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

The district encourages personal participation in the political process, including voting. Employees who need to be absent from work to vote during the early voting period or on election day must communicate with their immediate supervisor prior to the absence.

Charitable Contributions
Policy DG

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

Safety and Security
Policy CK series

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety and security of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety and security program includes

written guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. See Emergencies for additional information.

Employees must follow established protocols and response to emergencies for each campus and department. Refer to written security procedures specific to your location and work area.

To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students and to protect and conserve district equipment, employees must comply with the following requirements:

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

While driving on district business, employees are required to abide by all state and local traffic laws. Employees driving on district business are prohibited from texting and using other electronic devices that require both visual and manual attention while the vehicle is in motion. Employees will exercise care and sound judgment on whether to use hands-free technology while the vehicle is in motion.

The following are some important general professional and administrative staff safety rules that each employee is required to follow:

- Furniture, desks, chairs, file cabinets, etc., should be kept in safe condition and positioned so drawers do not open into walkways or halls.
- Desk and file cabinet drawers should not be left open.
- File cabinet drawers should be opened one at a time, and lower drawers should hold the heaviest load.
- Furniture should not be used as stools or ladders.
- Walkways, aisles, halls, and stairways should be kept clear of obstructions. • Do not attempt to move heavy objects; get help from maintenance or custodial personnel.
- Office machines should be double insulated or grounded with ground wire or three prong plugs.
- Do not attempt to make any electrical repairs on equipment or electrical cords. • Electrical extension cords should be three-wire, ground type. Ensure they are not placed where they may cause a tripping hazard.
- Store supplies in an orderly fashion. Heavier items should be stored waist high. Light items can be stored on upper or lower shelves.
- Flammable liquids should be stored in approved Flammable Liquid Storage cabinets. •

Room doors that open into hallways should be opened slowly.

- Duplicating machines that use ammonia, methanol, or other toxic liquids should be ventilated.
- Personnel operating office equipment should be trained before operating equipment. • Employees should be trained in how to use portable fire extinguishers and should be familiar with building evacuation procedures.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the maintenance and operations office at 903-677-6910.

Possession of Firearms and Weapons
Policies DH, FNCG, GKA

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs, or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school sponsored activity takes place. A person, including an employee, who holds a license to carry a handgun may transport or store a handgun or other firearm or ammunition in a locked vehicle in a parking lot, garage, or other district provided parking area, provided the handgun or firearm or ammunition is properly stored, and not in plain view. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisor or call AISD Superintendent at 903-677-6903 immediately.

Visitors in the Workplace
Policy GKC

All visitors are expected to enter any district facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the district premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge. Visitors may be subject to a health screening.

Asbestos Management Plan
Policy CSC

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

Pest Control Treatment
Policies CLB, DI

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

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located in common access areas. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests individualized notice will be notified by telephone, written, or electric means. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

General Procedures

Emergency School Closing

The district may close schools because of severe weather, epidemics, or other emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late, to release students early, or to cancel school, district officials will post a notice on the district's website and notify the following radio and television stations:

KCKL 95.9 FM

NBC Channel 5

FOX Channel 4

KLTV Channel 7

CBS Channels 11/21

Region 56 News KETK-Ch. 3

KYYK Radio Palestine

www.athensisd.net

www.athensreview.com

www.hendersoncountytexasnow.com

Emergencies
Policies CKC, CKD

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

Purchasing Procedures
Policy CH

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the Business Office through the Skyward Financial Management System on an official district purchase order (PO) form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without a PO number. The district will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district's business office. Contact the business office for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Management of School Funds

Campus Activity Fund - used for various purposes such as school pictures, yearbooks, and student IDs, etc.

Student Activity Fund - student council, cheerleaders, band, clubs, etc., that are officially sanctioned by local school district policy; these funds are controlled by the student groups themselves under the supervision of a member of the professional staff.

All provisions that apply to school district (budgetary) funds also apply to campus and student activity funds. All of these funds are included in the annual audits, as well as the annual financial report.

Student Activity Funds are funds raised by or from student groups to promote the general welfare, education and morale of all the students and to finance extracurricular activities of the student body.

A student group must have officers, bylaws, and a plan and is responsible for its actions. The existence of a student group implies that the group has a purpose, which is to be stated in the group's bylaws. The group must have a plan that outlines its activities for the year. There should also be a statement that in the event the group disbands, how the remaining funds, if any, are disbursed.

Campus Activity Funds are funds generated by or from vending machines, student IDs, sale of advertising for yearbook, etc. They are a part of the overall budgeted funds of AISD, but are

raised at the campus level.

To ensure funds are being recorded in the proper fund, “Campus or Student” is based upon the following questions:

Do other persons besides the students involved in the activity fund have the ability to use the activity fund money in a manner that does not directly benefit the students, but will benefit the campus? If so, this money should be accounted for as a Special Revenue Fund in Fund 461 – Campus Activity Funds. Does the activity fund financial decisions rest solely with the students? If so, the activity should be accounted for as a Student Activity Account for a student club or class funds.

All school funds shall be handled through a standard district-wide, school fiscal accounting system, keyed to budget classification with respect to the purposes of disbursements and the source of receipts. This system is a requirement of the Texas Education Agency.

The person making the deposit must code each bank deposit. It is recommended that a separate deposit is made for each coding. One copy of each deposit must be turned in to the business office. Also, along with the coding, an explanation should be on the deposit slip stating the source of the revenue. Failure to so code and explain will cause the deposit slip to be returned for this information. Each check deposited should include a written explanation of what the check was for (e.g., name of club, etc.). This will help identify any returned checks from the bank.

Purchase Orders are issued only from the business office. Procedures for purchasing are in the Business Procedures & Policy manual. Some points to remember about the purchasing process are:

A. An approved Purchase Order is required before a purchase may be made.

B. All purchases must be approved through the Principal/Director. Verbal approval from the Superintendent /Principal/Director for a special purchase does not exempt that purchase from completing the proper paperwork.

C. Clubs, classes, or organizations that have accounts in the Activity Fund will deposit such funds in the bank account mentioned above with the proper coding on the deposit slip. The sponsor will authorize payments from these Activity Fund accounts by completing a requisition through the AISD accounting software (Skyward), the same as any other Purchase Order requisition. Activity Fund monies are considered school funds even though control or use of these funds is left up to the organization.

D. All staff members are required to follow the AISD policies, practices and procedures. Please contact the business office with any questions.

Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the human resource office at 903-677-6931 if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary.

Personnel Records

Policy DBA, GBA

Most district records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. In most cases, an employee's personal email address is confidential and may not be released without the employee's permission.

Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

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

The choice to not allow public access to this information or change an existing choice may be made at any time by submitting a written request to the human resource office. New or terminated employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information may be released to the public until a request to withhold the information is submitted or another exception for release of information under law applies. An employee is responsible for notifying the district if he or she is subject to any exception for disclosure of personal or confidential information.

Facility Use

Policies DGA, GKD

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The campus administration in coordination with the Director of Maintenance and Operations is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact campus administrations and the maintenance and operations office or the athletic department to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

Termination of Employment

Resignations

Policy DFE, DHB

Contract Employees. Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received at least 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the superintendent or human resource office. Supervisors who have not been designated by the board to accept resignations shall instruct the employee to submit the resignation to the superintendent or human resource office.

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

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's resignation within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in *Reports to Texas Education Agency*. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and there is evidence to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

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

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of a non-certified employee's resignation or termination within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct of abuse of a student, or was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual conduct with a student or minor. The superintendent will notify TEA within seven business days of receiving a report from a principal, or of knowing about an employee's resignation or termination following an alleged incident of misconduct described above.

Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

Policy DF Series , DHB

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be non-renewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The timelines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee.

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's termination within seven days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in Reports to the Texas Education Agency. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee is terminated and there is evidence to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when the employee's certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the timelines and procedures can be found in the DF series policies that are provided to employees or are available online.

Dismissal of Noncontract Employees

Policies DCD, DP

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 district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Non-contract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See *Complaints and Grievances*)

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of a non-certified employee's resignation or termination within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct of abuse of a student, or was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual conduct with a student or minor. The superintendent will notify TEA within seven business days of receiving a report from a principal, or knew about an employee's resignation or termination following an alleged incident of misconduct described above.

Discharge of Convicted Employees

Policy DF

The district shall discharge any employee who has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for an offense requiring the registration as a sex offender or convicted of a felony under Title 5 Penal Code if the victim was a minor. If the offense is more than 30 years before the date the person's employment began or the person satisfied all terms of the court order entered on conviction the requirement to discharge does not apply.

Exit Interviews and Procedures

Exit interviews will be conducted for all employees leaving the district. This will be accomplished electronically or employees may request a face-to-face meeting if preferred. Information on

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

Reports to Texas Education Agency

Policies DF, DHB, DHC

Certified Employees. The resignation or termination of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA if there is evidence that the employee was involved in any of the following:

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

The reporting requirements above are in addition to the superintendent's ongoing duty to notify TEA when a certified employee or an applicant for certification has a reported criminal history or engaged in conduct violating the assessment security procedures established under TEC §39.0301. "Reported criminal history" means any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions including arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal information, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction that is obtained by a means other than the Fingerprint-based Applicant Clearinghouse of Texas (FACT).

Non-certified Employees. The voluntary or involuntary separation of a non-certified employee from the District must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA by the superintendent if there is evidence the employee abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor, was involved in a romantic relationship with a student or minor, or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor.

Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

The district is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance. Notice of the following must be

sent to the support recipient and the court or, in the case of child support, the Texas Attorney General Child Support Division:

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

Student Issues

Equal Educational Opportunities
Policies FB, FFH

In an effort to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Athens ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students based on any of the reasons listed above should be directed to the Deputy Superintendent, Mrs. Ginger Morrison, 104 Hawn Street, Athens, Texas 75751, 903-677-6903.

Student Records
Policy FL

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

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

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

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

Parent and Student Complaints
Policy FNG

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

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

Administering Medication to Students
Policy FFAC

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

Dietary Supplements
Policies DH, FFAC

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

Psychotropic Drugs
Policy FFAC

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

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

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

Student Conduct and Discipline
Policies in the FN series and FO series

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

Student Attendance
Policy FEB

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the district's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require minor students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the student handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

Bullying
Policy FFI

Bullying is defined by §TEC 37.0832. All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying, including cyberbullying, to the campus principal. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students may be found at the following link:

FFI- https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/624?filter=FFI

Hazing
Policy FNCC

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of "initiation rites" of a school club or organization. While most initiation rites are permissible, engaging in or permitting "hazing" is a criminal offense. Any teacher, administrator, or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus administrator.