

# The Prairie Lea Independent School District Employee Handbook Online



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## Acknowledgment of Free Access to Employee Handbook

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Current Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby acknowledge my ability to access the Prairie Lea ISD Employee Handbook at my discretion. I understand that I may print the entirety of this online handbook if I so desire and if I am unable to print this document that I may request a copy be printed for me. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.**

**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 an administrator or the Director of School Business if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# Introduction

The purpose of this online 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 principal's secretary.

This online handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. Nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of noncontract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or contact the Director of School Business. Policy manuals are located District Office, the Teacher's Workroom, and the Principal's Office.

## District Information

### Description of the district

Prairie Lea ISD is located on San Marcos Highway (Hwy 80) between Luling and San Marcos. It is one of three districts in Caldwell County. Prairie Lea I.S.D. serves students from Fentress, Prairie Lea, Stairtown, and their surrounding areas.

### Mission statement

**We will provide students with the tools and skills needed for continuous lifelong learning, to promote respect for themselves and others, and to become productive citizens in an atmosphere that encourages flexible thinking, creativity and physical and emotional well being through the combined efforts of family, school and community.**

### Board of Trustees Policies (BA, BAA, BBA, BBB, BBE, BBF, BE, BEC, BED)

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 law 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. Trustees are elected and serve 3 year terms. Trustees serve without compensation, must be registered voters, and must reside in the district.

#### **Prairie Lea Independent School District Board of Trustees**

##### **Officers**

**Mr. Margarito Zapata, Jr. President**  
**Mrs. Tyson Meneley, Vice President**

##### **Members**

**Mr. Rudy Gonzales**  
**Mrs. Rhonda Shahan**

**Mrs. Rita Hall, Secretary**  
**Mr. Wesley Plant, Parliamentarian**

**Mr. Margarito Zapata III**

## **Board Meeting Times**

The board usually meets the second Thursday of the month. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

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

## **Prairie Lea Independent School District Administration**

**Mr. Jesus Lopez III, Sup't.**

**Ms. Darleen Davidson, Dir. of School Business**

**Ms. Teresa Acklin, Athletic Dir.**

**Ms. Connie Schnuriger Admin. Asst.**

**Mr. Darren Kesselus, Principal**

**Ms. Debbie Word, Counselor**

**Jennifer Johnson, Sec'ty. to Sup't. & Personnel**

**Mrs. Cindy Plant, Principal Secretary**

**Mr. Larry Markert, Testing Coord.**

## **Employment**

### **Equal employment opportunity (*Policy DAA*)**

The Prairie Lea Independent School District does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or military status should contact the Superintendent who also serves as the district's Title IX coordinator. In addition, employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should also contact the Superintendent.

### **Job vacancy announcements (*Policy DC*)**

Announcements of job vacancies are posted on the right and left glass window panels at the front of the main building for 24 hour accessibility. In addition, job postings are also posted on the district's web site: [www.prairielea.txed.net](http://www.prairielea.txed.net).

### **Employment after retirement**

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed in certain positions on a full- or part-time basis without affecting their benefits, according to TRS rules and state law. As these rules have been in a constant state of change, employees should consult directly with TRS for the most up to date information.

Employees can contact TRS for additional information by calling 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web ([www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)).

### **Contract & Non-contract employment** (*Policies DC, DCA, DCB, DCC, DCD, DCE*)

State law requires the district to employ all full-time professional employees in positions requiring a certificate from 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.** 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 at least a two-year lapse in district employment also may be employed by probationary contract. Probationary contracts are one-year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed in public schools for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district may not exceed one school year. For those with less experience, the probationary period will be three school years (i.e., three one-year contracts) with an optional fourth school year if the board determines it is doubtful whether a term or continuing contract should be given.

**Term and continuing contracts.** Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification will be employed by term or continuing 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 and employment policies.

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

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

### **Searches and alcohol and drug testing** (*Policy 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, work areas, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work sites or used in district business.

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

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 when an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs returns to duty.

All employees required to have a CDL who are subject to alcohol and drug testing will receive a copy of the district's policy, the testing requirements, and detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse and the availability of assistance programs. Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact The Superintendent, Superintendent.

### **First aid and CPR certification (*Policy DBA*)**

Sponsors of an extracurricular athletic activity and/or employees responsible for transporting students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Certification must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. The district encourages all employees to gain and/or maintain CPR and First Aid certification. Reimbursement for CPR/First Aid training may be possible, employees seeking certification should contact the administrator assigned as their evaluator.

### **Reassignments and transfers (*Policy DK*)**

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the Superintendent or designee when the Superintendent determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the district. Reassignment is a transfer to another position that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the district process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and district policy DGBA (Local).

Employees with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another position. A written request for a change in assignment must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. Teachers requesting a change in assignment before the school year begins must submit their request to the administrator who serves as their primary evaluator. Requests for assignment changes during the school

year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found.

### **Workload and work schedules** *(Policy DL)*

**Professional employees.** Professional and administrative employees are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10, 11, or 12 month basis, according to the work schedules set by the district. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules including required days of service and scheduled holidays are embedded in the district's annual calendar. The annual calendar may be found at the district website, or a copy may be obtained from the main office.

Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation and 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. Teachers and librarians are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes.

**Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees.** Support employees are employed at-will and will be notified of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees are not exempt from overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor.

### **Notification of parents regarding qualifications** *(Policy DK, EHBD)*

In schools receiving Title I funds, the district is required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. NCLB also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Texas law also requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notification under NCLB is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals serving with an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take the EXCET exam) or individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. No later than the 30th instructional day after the date of assignment the Superintendent or designee will send a written notice to parents. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request.

Employees who have questions about their certification status can call Superintendent.

### **Outside employment and tutoring** *(Policy DBF)*

Employees who wish to accept outside employment or engage in other activities for profit must submit a written request to their supervisor. Approval for outside employment will be determined by the Superintendent and based on whether outside employment interferes with the duties of the regular assignment. Staff members are not allowed to

privately tutor their students for pay during the regular school year except at winter break, spring break, and summer unless prior permission has been secured from the administrator most recently assigned as their primary evaluator.

### **Performance evaluation** (*Policy DN, DNA, DNB*)

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, have a performance conference with their supervisor, and get the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

### **Employee involvement** (*Policy BQA, BQB*)

Prairie Lea ISD offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees. As part of the district's planning and decision-making process, employees are elected to serve on advisory committees..

### **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** (*Policy DEA*)

Employees are paid in accordance with the district's established pay structure. The district's pay plans are reviewed annually and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional and administrative employees are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid based on hourly wages or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each overtime hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek.

All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules 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 business director or Superintendent's secretary for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

## **Paychecks**

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

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

The schedule of pay dates for the 2006–2007 school year will be on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the 25<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or school holiday, payday will be the nearest work day to the 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **Automatic payroll deposit**

Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into an account at their bank. A notification period of one month is necessary to activate this service. With automatic deposit, an employee's pay is immediately available on the pay date. Contact the Superintendent's Secretary for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

## **Payroll deductions (*Policy CFEA*)**

Automatic payroll deductions for the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) and federal income tax are required for all full-time employees. Medicare tax deductions also are required for all employees hired after March 31, 1986. Temporary and part-time employees who are not eligible for TRS membership must have their Social Security contributions deducted.

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

## **Overtime compensation (*Policy DEA*)**

The district compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. All employees are classified as exempt or nonexempt for purposes of overtime compensation. Professional and administrative employees are ineligible for overtime compensation. Only nonexempt employees (hourly employees and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Nonexempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor.

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours weekly and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional

pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:01A.M. Sunday and ends at midnight on Saturday.

Employees may be compensated for overtime at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 hours of compensatory time.
- Comp time must be used in the duty year that it is earned.
- Use of comp time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval as workload permits.
- An employee may be required to use comp time before using any other available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

### **Travel expense reimbursement** *(Policy DEE)*

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

### **Health, dental, and life insurance** *(Policy CRD)*

Group health insurance coverage is provided through TRS-ActiveCare, the statewide public school 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 regularly scheduled to work at least 10 hours per week

TRS retirees and employees who are not contributing TRS members that are regularly scheduled to work less than 10 hours per week are not eligible to participate in TRS-ActiveCare.

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each spring. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact the Superintendent's secretary for more information.

### **Supplemental insurance benefits** *(Policy CRG)*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for Riata Financial Services. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Superintendent's secretary 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). Riata Financial, the district's 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. 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 district's Director of School Business. Employees unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code.

### **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 under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act. 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 district's Director of School Business.

### **Teacher retirement** (*Policy DEG*)

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least one-half of the normal work schedule are members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). Substitutes not receiving TRS service retirement benefits who work at least 90 days a year are also eligible for TRS membership and to purchase a year of creditable service. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the Superintendent's secretary as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits are available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web ([www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)).

## **Leaves and Absences** *(Policy DEC)*

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 have personal needs that will require long leaves of absence should call Superintendent for counseling about leave options, continuation of benefits, and communicating with the district.

Employees who take an unpaid leave of absence may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health care benefits for employees on leave authorized under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the district as they were when they were working. Otherwise, the district does not make benefit contributions for employees who are not on active payroll status.

Employees must follow district procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate leave request form. Any employee who is absent more than 5 days because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and—in the case of personal illness—the employee's fitness to return to work.

Personal and local sick leave is earned on a yearly basis. Leave is available for the employee's use September. 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.

### **Personal leave**

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. There is no limit on the accumulation of state personal leave, and it can be transferred to other Texas school districts and is generally transferable to education service centers. There are two types of personal leave: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

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

**Discretionary Leave** that is taken at an employee's discretion and that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a notice of the request 3 days in advance of the anticipated absence to his or her principal or supervisor. Discretionary personal leave will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis. The effect of the employee's absence on the

educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor. See Appendix A for additional policy and procedural information related to discretionary leave.

## **Sick leave**

Previously accumulated state sick leave is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. Sick leave can be used only in half increments except when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis or when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

If an employee uses more sick leave than he or she has earned, the cost of unearned sick leave will be deducted from the employee's next paycheck.

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

## **Temporary Disability**

**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. A full-time educator may request to be placed on temporary disability leave or be placed on leave. Pregnancy and conditions related to pregnancy are treated the same as any other temporary disability.

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. The leave request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 30 days. If disability leave is not approved, the employee must return to work or be subject to termination procedures.

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 administrator who serves as the employee's primary evaluator, 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 do the job. Professional employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned as soon as an appropriate position is available. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, professional employees will be reinstated at the beginning of the following school year.

## Family and Medical Leave

Given that the Prairie Lea Independent School District has less than 50 employees as of the writing of this policy summary, it is currently exempt from the Family and Medical Leave Act. Therefore, requests will be handled on an individual basis. Once the district employs 50 or more employees: Employees who have been employed by the district for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months immediately preceding the need for leave are eligible for family and medical leave. Use of leave can be for the following reasons:

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

A husband and wife who are both employed by the district are subject to limits in the amount of leave that they can take to care for a parent with a serious health condition or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child.

Eligible employees are entitled to continue their health care benefits under the same terms and conditions as when they were on the job and are entitled to return to their previous job or an equivalent job at the end of their leave. Under some circumstances, teachers who are able to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue their leave until the end of the semester.

Family and medical leave runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The district will designate the leave as family and medical leave, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

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

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

When the need for family and medical leave is foreseeable, employees who want to use it must provide 30-day advance notice of their need. When the need for leave is not foreseeable, employees must contact the administrator who serve as their primary evaluator as soon as possible. Employees may be required to provide the following:

- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting the employee or an immediate family member
- Second or third medical opinions and periodic recertification of the need for leave
- Periodic reports during the leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work

□ Medical certification from a qualified health care provider at the conclusion of leave of an employee's ability to return to work

Employees requiring family and medical leave should contact the Superintendent for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **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 sick leave or any other paid leave benefits. While an employee is receiving workers' compensation wage benefits, the district will charge available leave proportionately so that the employee receives an amount equal to the employee's regular salary.

## **Assault Leave**

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

## **Bereavement Leave**

Bereavement leave will be considered on a case by case basis.

## **Jury Duty**

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

## **Other Court Appearances**

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

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

## **Military Leave**

Paid leave for military service. Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, or reserve component of the armed forces will be granted a paid leave of absence without loss of any accumulated leave for authorized training or duty orders. Paid military leave will not exceed 15 days per year. In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service.

**Reemployment after military leave.** Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or ordered to active state military duty (Texas National Guard or Texas State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed in the position they would have held if employment had not been interrupted or reassigned to an equivalent or similar position provided they are still qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment to Superintendent.

**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 for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

# **Employee Relations and Communications**

## **Employee recognition and appreciation** *(Policy DJ)*

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

## **District Communications**

Throughout the school year, the campus office publishes newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer the school 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 process that all employees must follow. Employees are encouraged to discuss their concerns or complaints with the 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.

## **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.
  
- Know and comply with department and district policies and procedures.
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use district time, funds, and property for authorized district business and activities only.

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day the Superintendent first learns of the incident.

### **Staff Dress Code**

Professional Dress: At minimum, employees are expected to adhere to the secondary student dress code where the code pertains to garments - garments include footwear and head coverings with the exception of hats used in coaching and cheerleading while outdoors. Staff are expected to exercise discretion in their selection of clothing by selecting attire that is clearly within the bounds of the established code.

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

#### **Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators**

## **Statement of Purpose**

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

### **Professional Standards**

#### **1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **3. Ethical Conduct toward Students**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Harassment** (*Policies DH, DIA*)

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees 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.

Employees who believe they have been harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor, or appropriate district official. If the campus principal or supervisor is the subject of a complaint, the employee should report the complaint directly to the Superintendent.

## **Harassment of students** (*Policies DH, FFG, FFH*)

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment or abuse of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law.

## **Drug-abuse prevention** (*Policies DH, DI*)

Prairie Lea 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.

## **Reporting suspected child abuse** (*Policy DG, DH, FFG, GRA*)

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to

local office or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

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

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution for the commission of a Class B misdemeanor. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

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

## **Fraud and financial impropriety** (*Policy DG, 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 includes, but is not limited to, 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
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district

## **Conflict of interest** (*Policy BBFA, DBD*)

Employees are required to disclose to their supervisor 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*

An employee with a substantial interest in a business entity or interest in real property must disclose the interest to the district prior to the award of a contract or authorization of payment. This is done by filing an affidavit with the Director of School Business. An employee is also considered to have substantial interest if a close family member (e.g., spouse, parent, child, or spouse's parent or child) has a substantial interest.

### **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 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.

### **Associations and political activities** (*Policy DGA*)

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

### **Safety** (*Policy CK*)

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students and to protect and conserve district equipment, employees must comply with the following requirements:

- Observe all safety rules.
- Only use implements with training/authorization.
- Keep work areas clean/orderly at all times.
- Immediately report accidents to supervisor.
- Only use implements with training/authorization.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the district Superintendent.

### **Tobacco use**

*Policies DH, GKA, FNCD*

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

### **Employee arrests and convictions** (*Policy DH*)

An employee who is arrested for any felony or any offense involving moral turpitude must report the arrest to the principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of the arrest. An employee who is convicted of or receives deferred adjudication for such an offense must also report that event to the principal or immediate supervisor within three days of the event. **\*\* The district will conduct periodic criminal history checks on all employees throughout each school year. \*\***

Moral turpitude includes, but is not limited to, the following:

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

### **Possession of firearms and weapons** (*Policies FNCG, GKA*)

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisors or call Sheriff's Office immediately.

### **Visitors in the workplace** (*Policy GKC*)

All visitors are expected to enter through the main entrance and sign in or report to the 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 main office or contact the administrator in charge.

### **Copyrighted materials** (*Policy EFE*)

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of 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.). Rented video-tapes are to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or back-ups of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

## **Computer use and data management** *(Policy CQ)*

The district's electronic communications systems, including its network access to the Internet, is primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use of the system is permitted if the use:

- Imposes no tangible cost to the district
- Does not unduly burden the district's computer or network resources
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance
- Does not pose a security risk to the network or local computer

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

Employees and students who are authorized to use the systems are required to abide by the provisions of the district's communications systems policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact Superintendent's office.

## **Asbestos management plan** *(Policy CKA)*

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

## **Pest control treatment** *(Policy DI, CLB)*

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

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located on the front door of the main building. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

# **General Procedures**

## **Bad weather closing** *(Policy CKC)*

The district may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent or his designee will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late

or to release students early, the following radio and television stations will be notified by school officials:

<i><b>KVUE IN AUSTIN</b></i>	<i><b>CH. 24</b></i>
<i><b>KVET</b></i>	<i><b>98.1</b></i>

### **Emergencies** (*Policy CKC*)

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

### **Purchasing procedures** (*Policy CH*)

All requests for purchases must be submitted on an official district purchase order (PO) form with the appropriate approval signatures. Purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district in excess of \$100.00 must be made with a preauthorized 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. Contact the Director of School Business for additional information on purchasing procedures.

### **Name and address changes**

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

### **Personnel records** (*Policy GBA*)

Most district records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

- Address    •Phone number    •Social Security number
- Information that reveals whether they have family members

The choice to not allow public access to this information may be done at anytime by submitting a written request to Darleen Davidson. New or terminating employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information will be released to the public.

## **Building use** *(Policy GKD)*

The principal is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the principal's secretary to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged. Specific building usage procedures are in development. Contact the Director of School Business for the most up to date procedural information on this topic.

# **Termination of employment**

## **Resignations** *(Policy DFE)*

**Contract employees.** Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Superintendent. Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the board of trustees. Resignation without the consent of the board may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

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

## **Dismissal/nonrenewal of contract employees** *(Policies DF: AA, AB, BA, BB, CA, D, F)*

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

## **Dismissal of noncontract employees** *(Policy DCD)*

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, religion, sex, national origin, disability, military status, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination.

## **Exit interviews and procedures** *(Policy DC)*

Exit interviews may be scheduled for employees leaving the district at the discretion of the Superintendent. 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, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment. The district may withhold the cost of any unreturned items from the final paycheck.

### **Reports to State Board for Educator Certification** *(Policy DF)*

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

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

The district is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance to the court and the individual receiving the support (Texas Family Code §8.210, 158.211). Notice of the following must be sent to the court and support recipient:

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

## **Student Issues**

### **Equal educational opportunities** *(Policy FB)*

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students on any of the bases listed above should be directed to the Superintendent.

## **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: Legal Guardians, Parents whether 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, students 18 or older or emancipated by a court, and 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. The campus office or the Superintendent's office can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint.

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

## **Administering medication to students** *(Policy FFAC)*

Only designated employees can administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. A student who must take 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 health official for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

## **Dietary supplements** *(Policy 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 psycho-tropic drug to a student

### **Student 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 student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus principal.

When a student receives a disciplinary referral, it is the referring staff member's responsibility to completely fill out the referral to the best of their knowledge. Referrals based upon an accumulation of lesser infractions should include detailed information regarding the staff member's previous methods of interventions.

### **Student attendance** (*Policy FDD*)

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the district's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student, upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent or legal guardian 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.

### **Hazing** (*Policy FNCC, FO*)

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of initiation rites|| of a school club or organization. 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 discipline person.