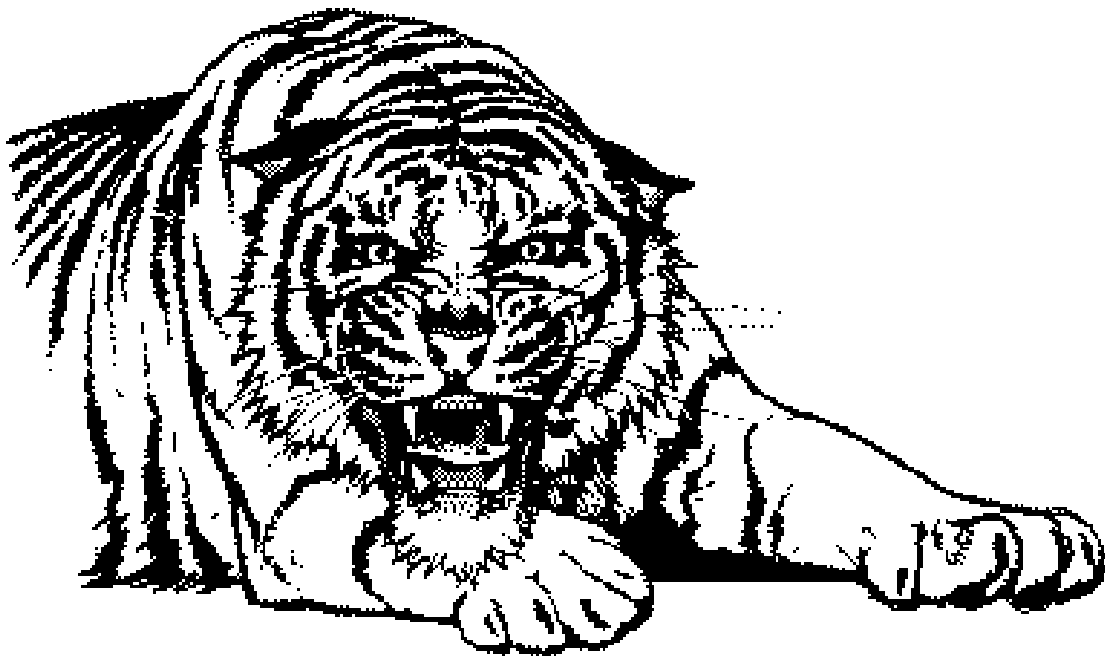


Tiger Pride School Wide

Latexo ISD 2009 – 2010 Employee Handbook

Dr. Roy H. Tucker, Superintendent
Cynthia Neel, Assistant Superintendent/High School Principal
Dr. Stacy Easterly, Elementary Principal



Latexo ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs

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 your Principal or the Superintendent.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. It is not intended to alter the at-will status of employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies. District policies and procedures can change at any time. 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. Policy manuals are located in the Principal's Office and are available for employee review during normal working hours.

District information

Description of the district

298 FM 2663

P.O. Box 975, Latexo, Texas 75849

(Seven miles North of Crockett, ¼ mile East on FM 2663)

(936) 544-5664 **Administration office**

(936) 544-5332 **Fax**

(936) 544-5638 **High School Office**

(936) 546-5630 **Elementary Office**

Superintendent: Dr. Roy Tucker

Assistant Superintendent/Jr. High & High School Principal: Cynthia Neel

Elementary Principal: Dr. Stacy Easterly

Mission statement

The Mission of the Latexo Schools is to insure that all Latexo children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation.

District goals and objectives

Policies AF, EA

As Instructional leaders, it is our responsibility to:

1. Establish and maintain a positive and open learning environment to bring about the motivation and social integration of students and staff;
2. Build strong local support for education;
3. Develop and deliver effective curriculum that meets the needs and expands the opportunities of the student body;
4. Develop and deliver effective models/methods of instructional delivery that make best use of time, staff, and resources to maximize student outcomes;
5. Create programs of continuous improvement, including evaluation of both staff and program effectiveness as keys to student learning and development;
6. Skillfully manage the school operation and facility to enhance student learning.

Changing demographics, economy, technology, labor market structures, and family structures will create significant challenges in the future for schools and school leaders.

We pledge to meet these challenges by striving to:

1. Reduce dropouts and absenteeism;
2. Improve basic skills of High School graduates;
3. Ease the transition for High School to the labor market;
4. Improve the paths for youth into higher education and the military;
5. Give students the opportunity to develop useful work habits.

In short, we will work to continue to maintain and improve the quality of education offered by the Latexo I.S.D.

Administration

Roy Tucker – Superintendent

Cynthia Neel-Assistant Superintendent/Jr. High & High School Principal

Dr. Stacy Easterly – Elementary School Principal

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Employment

Equal employment opportunity

Policy DAA

The Latexo ISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, military status, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities. Employees with questions or concerns relating to discrimination on any of the bases listed above should contact their supervisor or the superintendent.

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 will be distributed each school year.

Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation and conferences. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level 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. The district may require teachers to supervise students one day a week when no other personnel are available.

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.

Performance evaluation

Policy DN, DNA, DNB

Evaluation of an employee's job performance should be a continual 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.

Compensation

Salaries, wages, and stipends

Policy DEA

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and a pay structure established for each position. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or non-exempt according to federal law. Professional and administrative employees are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid based on hourly wages or provided compensatory time for each overtime hour worked.

Salaries and wages are reviewed on an annual basis and adjusted according to the budgeted amounts approved by the board. All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules before the start of each school year. Classroom teachers and librarians 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 administration office for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

Payroll deductions

Policy CFEA

Automatic payroll deductions for the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and federal income tax are required for all full-time employees. Medicare tax deductions 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.

Direct Deposit

Latexo ISD is a paperless paycheck system. Please contact Jo Lane, Business Manager to get further information.

Travel expense reimbursement

Policy DEE

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor and the superintendent must give approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule authorized by the board of trustees and the Internal Revenue Service. Employees must submit receipts to be reimbursed for expenses other than mileage.

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 superintendent. Employees who are unable to work due to a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code.

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 Texas Teacher Retirement System (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 Principals as soon as possible. Additional inquiries should be addressed to: Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-397-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (www.trs.state.tx.us).

Dress Code

All employees are expected to be professional in dress and appearance for the respective positions/assignments held.

Leaves and absences (See DEC legal and local for more information.)

Policy DEC

The term “immediate family” shall include:

1. Spouse.
2. 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*.
3. Parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, or other individual who stands *in loco parentis* to the employee.
4. Sibling, stepsibling, sibling-in-law.
5. Grandparent and grandchild.
6. Any person residing in the employee’s household at the time of illness or death.

For purposes of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the definitions of spouse, parent, son, or daughter, and next of kin are found in DECA (LEGAL).

Family Emergency

The term “family emergency” shall be limited to disasters and life-threatening situations involving the employee or a member of the employee’s immediate family.

Workday

A “workday” for purposes of earning, use, or recording shall mean the number of hours per day equivalent to the employee’s usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time.

Availability

The District shall make paid leave for the current year available for use at the beginning of the school year.

The District shall not approve paid leave for more workdays than have been accumulated in prior years plus those to be earned during the current year. Any absences beyond available paid leave shall result in deductions from the employee’s pay.

Earning Leave

An employee shall not earn leave when he or she is in unpaid status. An employee using full or proportionate paid leave shall be considered to be in paid status.

When an employee has used more leave than he or she has earned, the District shall deduct the cost of unearned leave days from the employee’s final paycheck for the year or from the last paycheck after the employee ceases to be employed by the District.

Recording

Leave shall be recorded as follows:

1. Leave shall be recorded in half-day increments for all employees.

2. If the employee is taking intermittent FMLA leave, leave shall be recorded in one-hour increments.

Order of Use

Earned compensatory time shall be used before any available paid state and local leave. [See DEA.]

Available paid state and local leave shall be used in the order determined by each employee.

Use of sick leave pool days shall be permitted only after all available state and local leave has been exhausted.

Concurrent Use of Leave

When an absent employee is eligible for FMLA leave, the District shall designate the absence as FMLA leave.

Temporary disability leave shall apply after all paid leave and compensatory time is exhausted, and all shall run concurrently with FMLA leave.

An employee receiving workers' compensation income benefits may be eligible for paid or unpaid leave. An absence due to a work related injury or illness shall be designated as FMLA leave, temporary disability leave, and/or assault leave, as applicable.

Medical Certification

An employee shall submit medical certification of the need for leave if:

1. The employee is absent more than five consecutive workdays because of personal illness or illness in the immediate family;
2. The District requires medical certification due to a questionable pattern of absences or when deemed necessary by the supervisor or Superintendent;
3. The employee requests FMLA leave for the employee's serious health condition or that of a spouse, parent, or child; or
4. The employee requests FMLA leave for military caregiver purposes.

In each case, medical certification shall be made by a health-care provider as defined by the FMLA. [See DECA (LEGAL)]

Note: For District contribution to employee insurance during leave, see CRD (LOCAL).

State Personal Leave

For purposes of this section, each employee shall earn state personal leave up to the statutory maximum of five workdays annually at the rate established in administrative regulations.

The Board requires employees to differentiate the manner in which state personal leave is used.

Non-Discretionary Use

1. Non-discretionary use of leave shall be for the same reasons and in the same manner as state sick leave accumulated before May 30, 1995. [See DEC (LEGAL)]

Discretionary Use

2. Discretionary use of leave is at the individual employee's discretion, subject to limitations set out below.

Limitations -

Request for Leave

The employee shall submit a written request for discretionary use of state personal leave to the immediate supervisor or designee in advance in accordance with administrative regulations. In deciding whether to approve or deny state personal leave, the supervisor or designee shall not seek or consider the reasons for which an employee requests to use leave. The supervisor or designee shall, however, consider the effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or District operations, as well as the availability of substitutes.

Limitations-

Duration of Leave

Discretionary use of state personal leave shall not exceed three consecutive workdays.

Local Leave

All employees shall earn three workdays of paid local leave per school year at the same rate as state personal leave.

Local leave shall accumulate to a maximum of ten workdays.

Local leave shall be used according the terms and conditions of state sick leave accumulated before the 1995-96 school year. [See DEC (LEGAL)]

Local leave shall be taken with no loss of pay when it is used after all state leave days have been exhausted. When local sick leave is used before accumulated state leave, the maximum daily rate for a substitute shall be deducted from the employee's pay.

Sick Leave Pool

Eligibility-

A sick leave pool may be established from voluntary donations by District staff to assist a fellow employee suffering from a family emergency. To receive days from the pool, the requesting employee must first have used all paid state and local leave and vacation days, if applicable.

Establishment-

A written request for the establishment of a sick leave pool shall be submitted to the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall initiate the sick leave pool for the employee and notify District staff.

Use-

The sick leave pool shall be created by voluntary contributions by District staff for a specific individual up to 30 days. Donated days shall be designated to a specific pool. Contributions may consist of one to two local or state personal leave days per donor, with no staff member permitted to contribute more than ten local or state leave days to

sick leave pools per school year. An individual employee for whom a pool is established may participate in the pool until he or she has used the total number of days from the pool. The cost of the substitute shall be deducted for sick leave pool days.

Cessation of Pool-

The sick leave pool shall cease to exist when the employee returns to work or the pool is exhausted. Unused sick leave pool days shall revert to the donors and shall be divided proportionately among individuals according to the amount contributed. Reimbursed days will be divided into increments of no less than half days. No general pool shall remain in existence.

Family and Medical Leave

For purposes of an employee's entitlement to FMLA, the 12-month period shall begin on the first duty day of the school year.

Twelve-month period Combined Leave for Spouses

If both spouses are employed by the District, the District shall not limit FMLA leave for the birth, adoption, or placement of a child, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition, to a combined total of 12 weeks, nor shall the District limit military care giver leave to a combined total of 26 weeks. [See DECA (LEGAL)]

Intermittent or Reduced Schedule Leave

The District shall not permit use of intermittent or reduced schedule FMLA leave for the care of a newborn child or for the adoption or placement of a child with the employee. [See DECA (LEGAL) for use of intermittent or reduced schedule leave due to a medical necessity.]

Certification of Leave

If an employee requests leave, the employee shall provide certification, as required by FMLA regulations, of the need for leave. [See DECA (LEGAL)]

Fitness-For-Duty Certification

If an employee takes FMLA leave due to the employee's own serious health condition, the employee shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification. If the District will require certification of the employee's ability to perform essential job functions, the District shall provide a list of essential job functions to the employee with the FMLA designation notice.

End of Semester Leave

If a teacher takes leave near the end of the semester, the District may require the teacher to continue leave until the end of the semester. [See DECA (LEGAL), LEAVE AT THE END OF A SEMESTER]

Failure to Return

If, at the expiration of FMLA leave, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the District may require reimbursement of premiums paid by the District during the leave. [See DECA (LEGAL), RECOVERY OF BENEFIT COST]

Temporary Disability Leave

Any full-time employee whose position requires educator certification by the State Board for Educator Certification or by the District shall be eligible for temporary disability leave. The maximum length of temporary disability leave shall be 180 calendar days. [See DBB (LOCAL) for temporary disability leave placement and DEC (LEGAL) for reinstatement.]

Workers' Compensation

Note: Workers' compensation is not a form of leave. The workers' compensation law does not require the continuation of the District's contribution to health insurance. [See CRD (LOCAL) regarding payment of insurance contribution during employee absences.]

An absence due to a work-related injury or illness shall be designated as FMLA leave, temporary disability leave, and/or assault leave, as applicable.

An employee eligible for workers' compensation income benefits, and not on assault leave, may elect in writing to use paid leave.

Court Appearances

Absences due to compliance with a valid subpoena or for jury duty shall be fully compensated by the District and shall not be deducted from the employee's pay or leave balance.

Complaints and grievances

Policy DGBA

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

The formal grievance process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative grievance procedures are exhausted, employees can bring grievances to the board of trustees.

See (DGBA) (Local).

Employee conduct and welfare

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. 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 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.

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 and property of students and coworkers and maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor as early as possible (preferably in advance) in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, and tardiness may be cause for disciplinary action.
- Know and comply with department and district procedures and policies.

-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 employees, as public servants, must follow the *Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators*, which is reprinted below:

Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

Professional Responsibility. The Texas educator should strive to create an atmosphere that will nurture to fulfillment the potential of each student. The educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community. In conscientiously conducting his or her affairs, the educator shall exemplify the highest standards of professional commitment.

Principle I: Professional Ethical Conduct. The Texas educator shall maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law, demonstrating personal integrity, and exemplifying honesty.

Standard 1. The educator shall not intentionally misrepresent official policies of the school district or educational institution and shall clearly distinguish those views from personal attitudes and opinions.

Standard 2. The educator shall honestly account for all funds committed to his or her charge and shall conduct financial business with integrity.

Standard 3. The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

Standard 4. The educator shall accept no gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment.

Standard 5. The educator shall not offer any favor, service, or thing of value to obtain special advantage.

Standard 6. The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

Principle II: Professional Practices and Performance. The Texas educator, after qualifying in a manner established by law or regulation, shall assume responsibilities for professional administrative or teaching practices and professional performance and shall demonstrate competence.

Standard 1. The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications and shall adhere to the terms of a contract or appointment.

Standard 2. The educator shall not deliberately or recklessly impair his or her mental or physical health or ignore social prudence, thereby affecting his or her ability to perform the duties of his or her professional assignment.

Standard 3. The educator shall organize instruction that seeks to accomplish objectives related to learning.

Standard 4. The educator shall continue professional growth.

Standard 5. The educator shall comply with written local school board policies, state regulations, and applicable state and other federal laws.

Principle III: Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall accord just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession.

Standard 1. The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 2. The educator shall not willfully make false statements about a colleague or the school system.

Standard 3. The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies, state, and federal laws regarding dismissal, evaluation, and employment processes.

Standard 4. The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political and citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Standard 5. The educator shall not discriminate against, coerce, or harass a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, or family status.

Standard 6. The educator shall not intentionally deny or impede a colleague in the exercise or enjoyment of any professional right or privilege.

Standard 7. The educator shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

Standard 8. The educator shall have the academic freedom to teach as a professional privilege, and no educator shall interfere with such privilege except as required by state and/or federal laws.

Principle IV: Ethical Conduct toward Students. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, should measure success by progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen.

Standard 1. The educator shall deal considerately and justly with each student and shall seek to resolve problems including discipline according to law and school board policy.

Standard 2. The educator shall not intentionally expose the student to disparagement.

Standard 3. The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 4. The educator shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions detrimental to learning, physical health, mental health, or safety.

Standard 5. The educator shall not deliberately distort facts.

Standard 6. The educator shall not unfairly 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 7. The educator shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning or deny the student access to varying points of view.

Principle V: Ethical Conduct toward Parents and Community. The Texas educator, in fulfilling citizenship responsibilities in the community, should cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community.

Standard 1. The educator shall make reasonable effort to communicate to parents' information that lawfully should be revealed in the interest of the student.

Standard 2. The educator shall endeavor to understand community cultures and relate the home environment of students to the school.

Standard 3. The educator shall manifest a positive role in school-public relations.

Sexual harassment

Policies DHC, FNCJ, FFG

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

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

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

See (DHC) (Local).

Employee-to-student. Sexual harassment of students by employees is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. Sexual harassment of students includes any welcome or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other oral, written, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature. Romantic relationships between district employees and students are strictly prohibited. Other prohibited conduct includes the following:

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

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

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

Drug-abuse prevention

Policies DH, DI

Latexo ISD is committed to maintaining an alcohol and a 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 on drug abuse and drug-free schools follows:

See DH (Local) and DI (Local).

Reporting suspected child abuse

Policy FFG

All employees are required by state law to immediately report any suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. Teachers and other professional staff are required to make a report to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. 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. State Law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

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

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

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.

Possession of firearms and weapons

Policies FNCG, GKA

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, illegal knives, or other weapons onto school premises or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the districts weapons policy should report it to their supervisors or call 911 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 main office of the building. 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.

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 videotapes are to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or backups of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

Computer use and data management

Policy CQ

The district's electronic communications systems', including its network access to the Internet, is to be used for administrative and instructional purposes only. 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 the Principals.

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 Superintendents office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

Pest control treatment

Policy DI

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located in Principals office. 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 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, school officials will notify the following radio and television stations: **KIVY / 92.7, KBHT / 93.5.**

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.

Personnel records

Policy GBA

Most district records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. A limited amount of personal information may be withheld. Employees may choose not to allow public access to or have the following information included in a staff directory by submitting a written request to the Superintendent's Secretary not later than 14 days after employment with the district begins or ends. Employees also may request open access to this information be closed at any time:

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

Building use

Policy GKD

The Principal is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the Principal to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

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 Principal. 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.

The superintendent will notify the Texas commissioner of education when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the acts listed in the section titled *Reports to the commissioner.*

Non-contract employees. Non-contract employees may resign their positions at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Campus Principal 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.

Local Considerations

TEC §21 .204(d) requires districts to provide each teacher and administrator employed by term contract with a copy of their contract, and upon request. Districts are not required to distribute copies of employment policies to non-contract, probationary contract, and continuing contract employees but may choose to do so. The statute requires districts with Web sites to place the employment policies on the Web site.

Dismissal or non-renewal of contract employees

Policies DFAA, DFAB, DFBA, DFBB, DFCA, DFD, DFF

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 non-renewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee. Information on the time lines and procedures can be found in the DF policies that are provided to employees or in the policy manuals located in the Principals office.

Dismissal of non-contract employees *Policy DCD*

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, religion, sex, national origin, disability, military status, 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*.

Exit interviews and procedures *Policy DC*

Exit interviews will be scheduled for all employees leaving the district. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the district with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the district with feedback on his or her employment experience.

All district keys, books, property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment.

Reports to the commissioner *Policy DF*

The dismissal or resignation of a certified employee will be reported to the Texas commissioner of education if there is reasonable evidence that the employee's conduct involves the following:

- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other illegal conduct with 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

Student issues

Equal educational opportunities

Policy FB

The Latexo School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, 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.

Student records, promotion, & grades

Policy FL, EIE (local)

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records. All transfer grades from another district will be honored as it is received. Teachers are responsible for getting the grades from the secretary/counselor for all incoming transfer students.

It is the responsibility of the campus principals and campus committees to determine a grading procedure each year for their respective campuses regarding the number and types of grades required (i.e. daily, test, project), the weights of types of grades, the weighted averaging of certain grades (i.e. Language Arts and Reading grades), etc.

Please be aware that SB 2033 now requires the district to adopt a grading policy, including provisions for the assignment of grades on class assignments and examinations, before each school year. Grades for assignments must be based on relative mastery. The grading policy may not require a teacher to give a minimum grade on an assignment that does not reflect the quality of the student's work. TASB expects to issue revisions to policy EIA (Local) at Update 86 in early fall 2009. Campus principals and employees will be updated at that time regarding the changes.

GRADES 1-6 Promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in language arts, reading, and mathematics. In addition, students in grade 3 must demonstrate proficiency by meeting the passing standard on the appropriate state approved assessment instrument for reading and students in grade 5 must demonstrate proficiency by meeting the passing standard on the appropriate state approved assessment instrument for reading and math as outlined by state assessment rules.

Grades 7-8 Promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in three of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. In addition, students in grade 8 must demonstrate proficiency by meeting the passing standard on the appropriate state approved assessment instrument for reading and math as outlined by state assessment rules.

Grades 9-12 Grade-level advancement for students in grades 9–12 shall be earned by course credits. [See EIE]

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 (if 18 or older) or emancipated by a court.
- School officials with legitimate education interests.

Materials that are not considered educational records and do not have to be made available to a parent or student include teachers’ personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher.

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.

MAKEUP WORK

Routine and In-depth Makeup Work Assignments [For further information see policy EIAB (Local).]

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

Students will be given the opportunity and are expected to make up assignments and tests missed during absences. It is the responsibility of the student to request and complete any assignment or test missed because of an absence. For any work assigned during a student’s absence, the student shall be permitted a minimum of one day for each day of absence to complete that work.

Students who miss class for an approved school activity are to notify the teacher in advance concerning the possibility of completing any tests or assignment prior to the absence. Students

who know in advance that they will be absent on the date a long-term assignment is due, should contact the teacher regarding arrangements to have long-term assignments turned in on or before the date due.

A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted as stated above may receive a grade of zero for the assignment. Students shall be permitted to take tests administered in any class missed because of absence.

Teachers may assign a late penalty to any project turned in after the due date in accordance with previously established guidelines approved by the principal and disseminated to students and parents, except in the case of excused absences whereby grading is to reflect student achievement with no penalty incurred. The project in the case of excused absences shall be due upon return to the class in which it is due.

The grade for makeup work after an unexcused absence shall be no higher than 70. The district shall not impose a grade penalty for makeup work after an absence because of suspension.

Grades/Progress Reports

Policy EIA (LOCAL)

Grade reports shall be issued every six weeks on a form approved by the Superintendent or designee. Performance shall be measured in accordance with this policy and the standards established in EIE.

Interim progress reports shall be issued for all students after the third week of each grading period. Supplemental progress reports (in addition to the three week progress reports) may be issued at the teacher's discretion

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 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. Once all administrative complaint procedures are exhausted, parents and students can bring complaints to the board of trustees.

Administering medication to students *Policy FFAC*

Only designated employees can administer prescription medication to students, non-prescription medication and herbal or dietary supplements to students. A student who must take medicine 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

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 a 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 psychotropic drugs to a student.

Student Discipline

Policies in the FN series and FO series

Students are expected to follow the campus rules, classroom rules, and rules listed in the Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management procedures 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.

Teachers must file a written report with the principal or another appropriate administrator when they have knowledge that a student has violated the Student Code of Conduct. A copy of this report will be sent by the principal or administrator to the student's parents within 24 hours.

Interviewing of Candidates

All materials used in selecting and interviewing candidates are subject to review by the following: Superintendent and Principal(s), School Board members, candidates for positions as well as their legal representatives.

These materials must be available on request to the above named party or parties, or if the recommendation for hiring is challenged by any candidate. Site-Based members need to be aware of the legal implications involved in the hiring process and for the necessity of objectivity during the interviewing itself.

Nominating Procedures The nomination and election process for the site-based committee will be done in accordance with local and legal policies BQB.

FIRST AID AND CPR CERTIFICATION

POLICY DBA

Head coaches and chief sponsors of an extra-curricular athletic activity (including cheerleading) that is sponsored or sanctioned by the district or UIL 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.

Each school nurse, assistant school nurse, athletic coach or sponsor, physical education instructor, marching band director, cheerleading coach, and any other employee specified by the Commissioner must receive and maintain certification in the use of an AED from the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, or a similar nationally recognized association.

Education Code 22.902 [See DMA]

NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS REGARDING CERTIFICATION STATUS

POLICY DBA<DK

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned a teacher for more than 30 consecutive days who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. 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.

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 employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to 2 years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave or count against the employee's family and medical leave entitlement and must be coordinated with worker's compensation benefits.

Special Programs

Dyslexia

Definition of Dyslexia

Dyslexia is one of several distinct learning disabilities. It is a specific language-based disorder of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single-word decoding, usually reflecting insufficient phonological processing. These difficulties in single-word decoding are often unexpected in relation to age and other cognitive and academic abilities; they are not the result of generalized developmental disability or sensory impairment. Dyslexia is manifested by variable difficulty with different forms of language, often including, in addition to problems with reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in writing and spelling (International Dyslexia Association Research Committee in collaboration with the National Center for Learning Disabilities and the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development, April 1994).

Recommendation for Assessment for Dyslexia:

Recommendations that a student be assessed for dyslexia can be made by the teacher, district staff, and/or parent. A recommendation may be made to the campus principal or the Assistant Superintendent. Once a recommendation has been made, the referral will then be presented to the District Pre-Referral Team. From that point, a campus support team meeting will be called to review the request and to discuss the student's academic progress and performance. Parents are invited and encouraged to be a part of the campus support team. The team will discuss possible actions needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance. Among the actions the team has available for the student is a recommendation that the student be assessed for dyslexia. If the team recommends the student be assessed for dyslexia, the parents or guardians will be notified of the proposal to assess the student and the parents/ guardians will be informed of their rights under 504. Parent permission to assess the student for dyslexia will be obtained. Assessments which include multiple measures of a student's reading abilities will be administered by trained personnel. Once the assessment is completed, the campus support team will reconvene and based on the information collected will determine if the student has dyslexia and whether the student has a disability under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 504. Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, the campus support team/504 committee will determine the appropriate instructional program and placement for the student.

For more information about the dyslexia program, please contact the campus principals or the Assistant Superintendent.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

It is the policy of the state that every student in the state who has a home language other than English and who is identified as limited English proficient shall be provided a full opportunity to participate in a bilingual education or English as a second language program, as required in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 29, Subchapter B. At this time, the Latexo ISD qualifies for and offers the English as a Second Language program to those students identified as limited English proficient based on criteria established by the state.

The home language survey shall be used to establish the student's language classification for determining whether the district is required to provide a bilingual education or English as a second language program. (Latexo ISD qualifies for and provides English as a Second Language program.) If the response on the home language survey indicates that a language other than English is used, the student shall be tested in accordance with 89.1225 adopted to be effective September 1, 1996, 21 TexReg 5700. Within the four weeks of their initial enrollment in the district, students shall be identified as limited English proficient and enrolled into the required bilingual education or English as a second language program.

The goal of English as a second language programs shall be to enable limited English proficient students to become competent in the comprehension, speaking, reading, and composition of the English language through the integrated use of second language methods. The English as a second language program shall emphasize the mastery of English language skills, as well as mathematics, science, and social studies, as integral parts of the academic goals for all students to enable limited English proficient students to participate equitably in school.

For information on the English as a Second Language Program, please contact the campus principals or the Assistant Superintendent.

Advanced Academic Services (Gifted and Talented)

State of Texas Definition

Adopted by the Texas Legislature, June 1995

Gifted and talented students means a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment, and who:

1. exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;
2. possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
3. excels in a specific subject academic field.

Latexo ISD defines giftedness in the same manner as the State of Texas.

Nominations

The Advanced Academic Services (Gifted & Talented) Program of the Latexo Independent School District serves students in grades K-12. Forms for nomination, handbooks, and information may be obtained from the campus principal or from the Assistant Superintendent. Nominations for the Advanced Academic Services Program will be taken from teachers, parents, peers, students themselves, or others who are aware of the student's performance. Students may

also be automatically referred for the program by superior performance on standardized measures. Nominations will be accepted throughout the year on an ongoing basis so that students may be referred at any time if the student's needs warrant such screening. A nominated student will then proceed through the screening process. The number of screening periods held each year will be in compliance with the number of screening periods required by law.

Screening

Students will be screened using multiple measures, both quantitative and qualitative to determine their aptitude, performance and productive thinking abilities. Measures will vary depending on the grade of the nominated student.

Program Divisions

The Advanced Academic Services (Gifted & Talented) Program of the Latexo ISD serves students in grades K-12. Grades K-6 are located on the elementary campus. Grades 7-12 are located on the secondary campus.

Kindergarten students will be screened for placement into the Advanced Academic Services (Gifted & Talented) Program during the spring of their kindergarten year. The kindergarten students that are recommended for placement into the program will begin receiving services by March 1st of that school year. Students in the Advanced Academic Services (G/T) Program in grades K-12 receive instruction through differentiated regular classroom curriculum.

For more information about the Advanced Academic Services (Gifted & Talented) Program, please contact the campus principal or the Assistant Superintendent.

Latexo Independent School District Parental Permission Form for a School Sponsored Trip

Date: _____

Latexo Public Schools is sponsoring a field trip away from school in which your student is eligible to participate.

Purposes: To provide students with educational exposure that can be accomplished by this trip.

The specific purpose of this trip is: _____

Destination: _____

Departure time and place: _____

Expected time of return: _____

The physical and moral well being of the students will receive priority throughout the trip, based upon the member's agreement to the following:

- 1.) All persons making this trip will be under the strict supervision of the school sponsor(s) and will be held accountable for improper conduct.
- 2.) Improper conduct shall include:
 - (a) Refusing to recognize the authority of the school sponsor or other adult sponsors.
 - (b) Any behavior which might endanger the safety of the member or any of the other members.
 - (c) Any behavior which is morally degrading to the member or any of the other members.
 - (d) Any behavior contrary to school regulations.

Punishment for improper conduct may include any of the following:

- 1.) Reprimand.
- 2.) Withholding of privileges during the trip.
- 3.) Forfeiture of right to go on future trip.
- 4.) If necessary, the sponsor may call the parents to come pick their student up and return home with him or the student may be placed on public transportation and returned home. Parents will be notified of the expected arrival time and place in the event this is necessary. As a last resort, an unmanageable student will be turned over to the nearest police or juvenile authority.
- 5.) Any student not abiding by all school and FFA rules while on FFA trips can be suspended from school, and in addition all extra curricular activities and awards, can be suspended for the remainder of the semester in accordance with HB 72, HB 13, and local student Code of Conduct.

The Advisors, or school will not be responsible for accidents or loss of property. Special items of equipment required for this trip are: _____

I have read the above rules, understand them, and agree to abide by them.

Signature of Student

Signature of Parent

Authorized by _____

Date _____

Principal

Latexo ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs