



South Texas Educational Technologies, Inc.

Employee Handbook

2016 - 2017

Revised
12/15/2016

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**SOUTH TEXAS EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES, INC
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM
2016-2017**

Name: _____
(Please print legal name)

Campus/Department: _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the STET Employee Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

_____ I understand that I may download a complete copy via the web address at www.stet.co

_____ I understand that I may request a copy in writing or from the campus secretary or campus principal.

_____ I understand that a hard copy is located at each campus secretary's office and each campus principal's office.

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

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

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

Signature: _____ *Date:* _____

PLEASE COMPLETE AND SIGN THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO YOUR IMMEDIATE PRINCIPAL WHO WILL FORWARD THE ORIGINAL TO THE STET PERSONNEL OFFICE.

NOTE: PLEASE FEEL FREE TO MAKE A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF
DUTY REGARDING STUDENT RECORDS**

As an employee of STET, Inc., I have been made aware of my duties and responsibilities regarding the confidentiality of student information. I understand that in the course of performing my duties as an employee of the STET I may have access to information concerning students of the school district. I understand that, with certain exceptions, access to personally identifiable student information is limited to the student, the parent or guardian of the student, and other persons authorized by state and federal law. I understand and agree that I will not release in any form, written, oral or electronic, any personally identifiable student information to any person not authorized to receive such information. I understand and agree that if I have any questions regarding whether I may release personally identifiable student information to a third party, I will refer the request to my immediate principal.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE AND SIGN THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO YOUR IMMEDIATE PRINCIPAL WHO WILL FORWARD THE ORIGINAL TO THE STET PERSONNEL OFFICE.

NOTE: PLEASE FEEL FREE TO MAKE A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.

PUBLIC ACCESS FORM OPTION

_____ /_____/_____
Name (Print) **Social Security#**

The Public Information Act allows employees, public officials, and former employees and officials to elect whether to keep certain information about them confidential. Unless you choose to keep it confidential, the following information about you may be subject to public release if requested under the Texas Public Information Act. Therefore, please indicate whether you wish to allow public release of the following information:

PUBLIC ACCESS? If yes please provide updated information

Home Address	NO	YES	
_____			_____
Home Telephone #	NO	YES	
_____			_____
Social Security #	NO	YES	
_____			_____
Information that reveals if you have family members	NO	YES	
_____			_____

(Signature)

(Date)

PLEASE COMPLETE AND SIGN THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO YOUR IMMEDIATE PRINCIPAL WHO WILL FORWARD THE ORIGINAL TO THE STET PERSONNEL OFFICE.

NOTE: PLEASE FEEL FREE TO MAKE A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.

INTRODUCTION

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

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. Nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of non-contract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; the 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 the handbook topics, confer with their principal or call the appropriate district office. Policy manuals are located at the Central Office and are available for employee review during normal working hours.

In compliance with H.B. No. 912, the South Texas Educational Technologies, Inc. (STET) offers all STET School Board Policies online at www.stet.co

At each school in the district, the board shall make a copy of the board's employment policies available for inspection at a reasonable time on request.

A copy of the board's employment policies will be provided upon request.

VISION STATEMENT

TOMMORROW'S EDUCATION TODAY

- !• Mission Possible, Everybody Can Learn
- !• School, Homes and Community Working Together
- !• Education Through Space-Age Technology

South Texas Educational Technologies, Inc. maximizes the education potential and the experience of continuous learning by every student within the school and community environment. It includes instruction in all forms of human potential: aesthetic, ethical, intellectual physical and technological. With this concept of education in mind, STET assumes the responsibility for providing a well-organized, flexible and varied program of classroom and out-of-classroom activities. Since students differ in interests, attitude and abilities, and parents have various aspirations for their children; the learning process needs to allow for the personal growth of individuals and families.

Our schools empower students to become competent, confident, productive, and responsible young adults who will possess the competencies, skills and attitude to succeed in an educational environment and in life as a member of the workforce for the twenty-first century.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of South Texas Educational Technologies, Inc. is to provide the highest quality education possible to all students. To the full extent of their individual abilities, students will be provided the opportunity to develop the capability to think logically, independently, and creatively, and to communicate effectively. The district will promote the worth and dignity of each individual child to prepare each child to become a productive and responsible member of society.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The TEAM of STET, Board Members, administrators, teachers, staff and parents, in partnership with community and public educational agencies, is committed to providing the resources and opportunities for all students to achieve educational excellence.

District goals and objectives are as follows:

1. Professional development - learning opportunities for all employees.
2. Technology - current in all technological changes, advances, and applications.
3. Academic excellence - focus on comprehension, critical thinking, application, and problem solving.
4. Communications- clear, concise, and accurate exchange of information, and understanding and implementation of policy.
5. Parental involvement- participation of parents as partners in the education of their children.
6. Learning environment- safe, efficient, state-of-the-art facilities and resources.

Public Education Mission, Goals, and Objectives

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

- OBJECTIVE 1: Parents will be full partners with educators in the education of their children.
- OBJECTIVE 2: Students will be encouraged and challenged to meet their full educational potential.
- OBJECTIVE 3: Through enhanced dropout prevention efforts, all students will remain in school until they obtain a diploma.
- OBJECTIVE 4: A well-balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students.
- OBJECTIVE 5: Educators will prepare students to be thoughtful, active citizens who have an appreciation for the basic values of our state and national heritage and who can understand and productively function in a free enterprise society.
- OBJECTIVE 6: Qualified and highly effective personnel will be recruited, developed, and retained.
- OBJECTIVE 7: Texas students will demonstrate exemplary performance in comparison to national and international standards.
- OBJECTIVE 8: School campuses will maintain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning.
- OBJECTIVE 9: Educators will keep abreast of the development of creative and innovative techniques in instruction and administration using those techniques as appropriate to improve student learning.
- OBJECTIVE 10: Technology will be implemented and used to increase the effectiveness of student learning, instructional management, staff development, and administration.

The academic goals of public education are to serve as foundation for a well-balanced and appropriate education. The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in:

- GOAL 1: The reading and writing of the English language.
- GOAL 2: The understanding of mathematics.
- GOAL 3: The understanding of science.
- GOAL 4: The understanding of social studies.

Education code 4001, 4002

Instructional Goals and Objectives

The District shall endeavor to maintain an educational program that will help each student to develop personal knowledge, skills, and competence to maximum capacity, and to learn behavior patterns, which will make each student a responsible member of society. In terms of their individual abilities, all students should achieve:

1. Competence in fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic in the early elementary grades, accompanied by studies in higher mathematics, science, history, free enterprise system, English, and other languages in the higher grades. These should be accompanied by a wide variety of optional courses. Skills in the logical processes of research, analysis, evaluation, and problem solving. Competence and motivation for continuing self-evaluation, self-instruction, and adaptation to a changing environment. Competence in reading, communication, and other language art skills according to grade level and individual ability.
2. Knowledge of the fundamental economic structure and processes of the American system, of the contribution of free enterprise, and of the opportunities for individual participation and success in the system. Occupational skills needed to enter and advance in the economic system or academic preparation for acquisition of technical or professional skills through post-high school training. Competence in the application of economic knowledge to practical economic functions, such as planning and budgeting for the investment of personal income, calculating tax obligations, financing major purchases, and obtaining desirable employment.
3. Knowledge about the United States and Texas systems of government and their political subdivisions. Competence in judging the merits of comparative political systems and ideologies with emphasis on democratic institutions, the American heritage, the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, and the comparative merits of candidates for political position. Skill for communicating with public officials at different levels of government. Skill for participating in the processes of public and private political organizations and in influencing decisions made by such organizations.
4. Knowledge about the requirements of personal hygiene, nutritional consumption, and physical exercise essential to the maintenance of personal health. Knowledge of the dangers to health from addiction to harmful substances or consumption of harmful materials. Skill in sports and other forms of recreation, which will permit life-long enjoyment of physical exercise. Competence in recognizing and preventing environmental, ecological, and health problems. Knowledge and experiences to provide information and develop skills and values needed to perform daily activities in a safe manner free from injury or other losses.
5. Knowledge of the arts, music, literature, drama, and other aesthetic expressions of various cultures. Competence in the critical evaluation and appreciation of diverse cultures.

6. Knowledge of basic psychological, sociological, and cultural factors affecting human behavior. Skills in interpersonal and group relations and information of ethical and moral standards of behavior. Competence for adjusting to changes in personal status and social patterns. Skills for coping with stress and pressure. Development of a self-image that builds self-concepts of a positive nature.
7. Competence and skill in creative and responsible use of leisure time.

State Board of Education Policy 3101.1, as amended.

Montessori Goals

1. Respect the uniqueness of each person
2. Preserve and nurture the innate capacity of students so they can reach their full potentials as contributing world citizens
3. Offer individually paced academic instruction and activities
4. Provide curricula for concept development and skill acquisitions in prepared classrooms
5. Focus on learning-by-doing
6. Engage students in purposeful and collaborative learning
7. Ensure students use inner discipline, concentration, and task completion for lifelong critical thinking and discovery
8. Work in concert with students and their families

CHARTER HOLDER BOARD 2016-2017

Alim U. Ansari

Chairman

Hassan Ahmad, Ph.D.

President

Juan Garcia, Ph.D.

Member

James O. Hayes, C.P.A.

Secretary

Randall Summers

Vice President

Aurora Saenz

Member

Sofia Kamal

Member

CENTRAL OFFICE

Alim U. Ansari

Superintendent of Schools

Angela Gonzalez

Senior Accountant

Yolanda Espinoza

Assistant Business Manager

Tammy Garza

PEIMS/Purchasing Coordinator

Roger Garcia

Math and Science Coordinator

Lauren Arce

Dean of Instruction

Marcos Ybarra, Mark Garcia, Roy Ortiz

Computer Technicians

Mahdi Shaheen

Marketing/Recruitment

Lizette Gonzalez

Receptionist

Anita Meyer

Administrative Assistant

James O. Hayes, CPA

Chief Financial Officer

Norma Torres

Human Resources

Jihad Colyer

Accounts Payable

Amanda Najjar

Accountant

Tana Armitage

ELA and Social Studies Coordinator

Isis Montes

Employee Benefits Specialist

Joseph Aquiningoc

Special Education Coordinator/Diagnostician

Angela Gutierrez

Speech Therapist

Galdina Del Angel

Custodian

Belinda Mendoza

Business/HR Clerk

DIRECTORY AND ADMINISTRATORS

STET CENTRAL OFFICE
2402 E. Business 83 Weslaco, TX 78596
(956) 969-3092 Office
(956) 969-8614 Fax

Mr. Alim U. Ansari, Superintendent

Horizon Montessori I
221 N. Main St. McAllen, TX 78501
956-668-1400
956-668-1404 (fax)

Mr. John Gonzalez, Principal
Mr. Adan Sabedra, Assistant Principal

Horizon Middle School
320 N. Main St. McAllen, TX 78501
956-668-1400
956-668-1404 (fax)

Horizon Montessori II
1222 W. Sugarcane Drive
Weslaco, TX 78596
956-969-0044
956-969-0065 (fax)

Ms. Janis Montemayor, Principal
Ms. Anna Barillas, Assistant Principal

Horizon Middle School
1223 W. Sugarcane Drive
Weslaco, TX 78596
956-969-3500
956-969-0065 (fax)

Horizon Montessori III
2802 S. 77 Sunshine Strip
Harlingen, TX 78550
956-423-8200
956-423-8207 (fax)

Dr. Patricia Quesada, Principal
Mr. Arthur Strutz, Assistant Principal

EMPLOYMENT

Equal Employment Opportunity

STET 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 about discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or military status should contact the superintendent. Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should also contact the superintendent.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

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

First Aid and CPR Certification

Nurses, physical education teachers, coaches, and athletic trainers must maintain and submit to human resources proof of current certification in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED). Certification must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification.

Workload and Work Schedules

Professional employees

Professional and administrative employees are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-12 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, including conferences. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level but must provide at least 450 minutes within each two-week period in blocks not less than 45 minutes. Teachers and librarians are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes; Paraprofessionals will supervise students during these lunch periods. The district may require teachers to supervise students during lunch one day a week when no other personnel are available and during state assessment dates.

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 assigned schedule without approval from their principal.

Notification of Parents Regarding Qualifications

In schools receiving Title I funds, the district is also 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 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 TExES/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 the human resource office.

Performance Evaluation

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continuous process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned principal 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 principal, and get the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

Staff Development

Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the district. Staff development for instructional personnel is predominantly campus-based, and 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 and continued employee skill development. An outline of your gained knowledge will be requested, one week upon return and he/she may be asked to present and share with their co-workers. This allows for growth and maximizing our resources.

Part-Time Employees

Part-time employees are personnel employed on a regular basis for less than one-half time of the normal work schedules for that position. Part-time employees are not eligible for group insurance coverage or supplemental insurance and may not participate in the cafeteria plan. Part-time employees are not eligible to be members of the Texas Retirement System (TRS).

Temporary Employees

Temporary and seasonal employees may be hired in situations where additional staff is required. A temporary employee is defined as one who assumes duties on a full-time or part-time basis in a position for a temporary period.

Individuals performing these duties will not be eligible for group insurance coverage or supplemental insurance and may not participate in the cafeteria plan. They will not receive state or local leave and are not eligible to be members of the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS).

The campus/department needing a temporary position must submit a Temporary Employee Request form to the human resource department.

Reassignment and Transfers

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the superintendent or designee when the superintendent or designee determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the district. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Campus reassignments must be approved by the principal at the sending and receiving campus except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes, the superintendent has final placement authority. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time unless an extracurricular or supplemental duty assignment is part of a dual-assignment contract. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the district process for employee complaints. An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's principal. A teacher requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit their request during the month of May. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Personnel Office and must be approved by the sending and receiving principal.

Outside Employment and Tutoring

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

Employee Involvement

At both the campus and district levels, STET offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees and influence the instructional effectiveness of the district. As part of the district's planning and decision-making process, employees are elected to serve on district- or campus-level advisory committees. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision-making process are available in each campus office or from the Superintendent.

Safety

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

1. Observe all safety rules
2. Keep work areas clean and orderly at all times
3. Immediately report all accidents to their principal
4. 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 **Campus Administrator at (956) 969-3092**.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

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 nonexempt according to federal law. Professional and administrative employees are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid based on hourly wages or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek.

All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules at the start of each school year. Contract employees who perform extracurricular or supplemental duties may be paid stipend in addition to their salary according to the district's extra-duty pay schedule.

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

All employees will complete a timesheet.

Paychecks

All professional employees are paid on the twenty-eighth of each month. Non-exempt employees will be paid on a bi-monthly basis. During the school year, paychecks are delivered to each campus. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization. During summer breaks, paychecks will be mailed to the employee's home address.

An employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of leave accumulated. Contact the payroll department if you have questions about your payroll statement.

Payroll Deductions

Automatic payroll deductions for the Texas Teacher Retirement System (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.

Overtime Compensation

The district compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. Only nonexempt employees (hourly employees and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their principal/supervisor.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's principal/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. Employees should provide hotels with a tax exemption form. *State tax must be removed from hotel bills.*

Employees must submit receipts to be reimbursed for expenses other than mileage.

Health and Life Insurance

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

1. Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
2. Employees who are active, 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 payroll department for more information.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

Employees can enroll in supplemental insurance programs at their own expense. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deductions. Employees should contact the payroll department for more information.

Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS Regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on

a pretax basis (i.e., disability, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer and dread disease, dental, and additional term life insurance). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.

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

Workers' Compensation Insurance

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 may 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 must be reported immediately to the principal. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance

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 human resource department.

Teacher Retirement

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least one-half time of the normal work schedule are members of the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS). Substitute's 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 Business Manager 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 at (www.trs.state.tx.us).

LEAVES AND ABSENCES

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 leave of absences. ***Employees who have personal needs that will require a leave of absence should call the human resource office 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 for employees who are not on active payroll status.

Employees must follow district and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate leave request form. An employee who is absent more than 10 workdays because of 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. **Note: Employees should NOT take personal leave before/after a holiday.**

Temporary Disability

Certified Employees

Any full-time employee whose position requires certification from the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) is eligible for temporary disability. 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 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 charter holder board. The employee may protest the action and present additional evidence of fitness to work.

When an employee is ready to return to work, the employee's principal 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.

Jury Duty

Upon receipt of a jury summons, an STET employee must notify his/her principal. All regular employees will be paid the full amount of their regular pay providing the employee gives the original jury summons to the Payroll department in a timely fashion. Some jury assignments are not continuous and jurors are released for significant periods of time in which you shall return to work.

Funeral Leave

In the event of a death in the immediate family, an employee will be given one (1) paid day to attend the

funeral. If the funeral location is at least 100 miles away from STET, the employee will receive one (1) paid day to travel to the location and one (1) paid day to return. If the funeral location is less than 100 miles from STET, the employee may extend the funeral leave as unpaid leave. "Immediate family" is defined as:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Husband | 8. Wife |
| 2. Father | 9. Mother |
| 3. Brother | 10. Sister |
| 4. Son | 11. Daughter |
| 5. Father-In-Law | 12. Mother-In-Law |
| 6. Brother-In-Law | 13. Sister-In-Law |
| 7. Grandmother | 14. Grandfather |

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WELFARE

Standards of Conduct

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

1. Recognize and respect the rights and property of students, parents other employees and members of the community
2. Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers
3. Report to work according to the assigned schedule
4. Notify their immediate principal as early as possible (preferably in advance) 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
5. Know and comply with department and district-policies and procedures
6. Express concerns, complaints, or criticisms through appropriate channels
7. Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a principal immediately
8. 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.

The Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification (TAC Title 19, Part 7, Chapter 247, Rule §247.2), 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 intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and its certification process.
- Standard 1.2** The educator shall not 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 of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.
- Standard 1.6** The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.
- Standard 1.7** The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal law.
- Standard 1.8** The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.
- Standard 1.9** The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.
- Standard 1.10** The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.
- Standard 1.11** The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.
- Standard 1.12** The educator shall refrain from the illegal use or distribution of controlled

substances and/or abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.

Standard 1.13 The educator shall not consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

2. Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 2.7 The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

3. Ethical Conduct Toward Students

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

Standard 3.2 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.

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

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

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

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

Standard 3.7 The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any

person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

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

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

- (i) The nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
- (ii) the subject matter of the communication;
- (iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
- (iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
- (v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
- (vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Dress and Grooming

The dress and grooming of District employees shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for their assignments, and in accordance with any additional standards established by their assignments, and in accordance with any additional standards established by their principal and approved by the Superintendent. District employees should not have any visible tattoos or piercings (excludes ear-piercing). Translucent clothing, spaghetti straps, flip-flops, low-cut blouses, yoga style pants, sandals without a back strap, or low-rise pants should not be worn. Jeans must not be faded or torn. Professional jeans are permissible on campus/district approved days only. Dresses and skirts must be below the knee.

Harassment

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 or appropriate district official. If the campus principal is the subject of a complaint, the employee should report the complaint directly to the superintendent.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment is attached.

Harassment of Students

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. 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.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students is attached.

Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention

STET, Inc. is committed to maintaining an alcohol-and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed. The district's policy regarding employee drug use is attached.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

All employees are required by state law to immediately 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 event that led to the suspicion. Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to a local office or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

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

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution for the commission of a Class B misdemeanor. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse 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. 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

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:

1. Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
2. Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
3. Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets, including employee time
4. Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
5. Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
6. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
7. Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
8. Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district
9. Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
10. Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
11. Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
12. Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district

Conflict of Interest

Employees are required to disclose to their principal 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 Business Manager. 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

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

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.

Tobacco Use

Smoking or using tobacco products is prohibited by law 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 or using tobacco products while inside the vehicle.

Employee Arrests and Convictions

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

1. Crimes involving school property or funds
2. Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator
3. Crimes that occur wholly or in part of school property or at a school-sponsored activity
4. Crimes involving moral turpitude. Moral turpitude includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Dishonesty
 - b. Fraud
 - c. Deceit
 - d. Theft
 - e. Misrepresentation
 - f. Deliberate violence
 - g. Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor

- h. Drug- or alcohol-related offenses
- i. Acts constituting abuse under the Texas Family Code

Possession of Firearms and Weapons

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 principal or call the assistant superintendent for personnel immediately.

Visitors in the Workplace

All visitors are expected to enter any district facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the district premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge. Employee visitors are not allowed during instructional time or during office work hours

Computer Use, Electronic Communication, and Data Management

EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

You are being given access to the District's electronic communications system. Through this system, you will be able to communicate with other schools, colleges, organizations, and people around the world through the Internet and other electronic information systems/networks. You will have access to websites, databases, libraries, and computer services all over the world. With this opportunity comes responsibility. It is important that you read the District policy administrative regulations and agreement form and ask questions if you need help in understanding them. Inappropriate system use will result in the loss of the privilege of using this educational and administrative tool. Please note that the Internet is a network of many types of communication and information networks. It is possible that you may run across some material you might find objectionable. While the District will take reasonable steps to restrict access to such material, it is not possible to absolutely prevent such access. It will be your responsibility to follow the rules for appropriate use.

RULES FOR APPROPRIATE USE

- The account is to be used only for educational and administrative 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.
- Downloading of video or audio streams for personal use is strictly prohibited. Video or audio streams may be downloaded for educational and school business use only.
- You will be held responsible at all times for proper use and the District may suspend or revoke your

access if you violate the rules.

- Remember that people who receive e-mail from you with a school address might think your message represents the school's point of view.

INNAPROPRIATE USES

- Using the system for any illegal purpose.
- Downloading or using copyrighted information without permission from the copyright holder.
- Posting messages or accessing materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.
- Wasting school resources through improper use of the computer system.
- Gaining unauthorized access restricted information or resource.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE

- Suspension of access to the system
- Revocation of the computer system
- Other disciplinary or legal action, in accordance with the District policies and applicable laws.

I understand that my computer use is not private and that the District may monitor my activity on the computer system.

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

Signature of Employee

Home Address

Home Phone Number

Date

PERSONAL USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Web sites (e.g., YouTube),

editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Face book, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications. As role models for the district's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If any employee's use of electronic media interferes with employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for Web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

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

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment.
- The employee shall not use the district's logo or copyrighted material of the district without express, written consent.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas educators, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus.

These restrictions include:

- Confidentiality of student records.
- Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
- Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses
- Copyright law
- Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false claims

COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS

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

Phone Use

School telephones are to be used for school business only. Personal long distance calls charged to the school are not allowed. If an employee makes a personal call charged to the school, the employee will pay a \$5.00 service fee plus the charge for each personal call

Personal cellular phone use is prohibited during working hours. If the employee has to make an emergency call, then the principal should be notified; emergency phone calls are allowed in the office.

Personal Business

No employee of South Texas Educational Technologies, Inc. is to conduct personal business during business hours. This includes soliciting business from employees or students/parents and use of cell phones or company phones in order to conduct business unrelated to STET. Any Employee that violates this regulation will be subject to immediate termination.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Bad Weather Closing

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. In the event that school is delayed for a one or two hour postponement, personnel should follow the listed procedures.

1. Food service, custodians and maintenance personnel shall report to work as directed by their immediate principal.
2. Aides, clerical, teachers and central office personnel will report at the adjusted start time.
3. Campus administrators will report at the normally scheduled time.

When it becomes necessary to open late, to release students early, or to cancel school, district officials will post a notice on the district's website and notify the following television stations:

- KGBT-TV Channel4 (956) 366-4423
- KRGV-TV Channel5 (956) 631-5555

Staff members are required to notify their campus administrator in the event of any extenuating circumstances that would prevent them from adhering to the above procedures.

Emergencies

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.

Name and Address Changes

It is important employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Payroll 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 Payroll Office. A completed W4 form is required for all permanent changes of: address marital status, withholding allowances name changes. In addition, a copy of the employee's social security card is required for all name changes.

Purchasing Procedures

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the Purchasing Department on an official electronic requisition form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without a Purchase Order number issued by the STET Business Office. The school district will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Additionally, employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use

through the district's business office. Contact STET Purchasing Department for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Only the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee may sign contracts or negotiate grants.

District Mail

All district mail may be opened. No personal mail or packages are to be mailed or received through the district mail.

Building Use

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The Superintendent or his designee is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the Superintendent to request the use of school facilities and to obtain information on fees charged.

Grievance Policy

South Texas Educational Technologies, Inc.
108802 (Local Policy)

PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS: Employee Complaint/Grievances

GUIDING PRINCIPLES INFORMAL PROCESS

The Board encourages employees to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with their principal or other appropriate administrator.

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH BOARD MEMBERS

Employees shall not be prohibited from communicating with a member of the Board regarding District operations except when communication between an employee and a Board member would be inappropriate because of a pending hearing or appeal related to the employee.

FORMAL PROCESS

If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the employee, he or she may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, employees are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. An employee whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or "mini-trial" at any level.

The District shall inform employees of this policy.

NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES

FREEDOM FROM RETALIATION

Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against an employee for bringing a concern or complaint,

COMPLAINTS AGAINST

Complaints alleging a violation of law by a supervisor may be made to the Superintendent or designee. Complaints alleging a violation of law by the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board or designee.

COMPLAINTS

In this policy, terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning. This policy shall apply to all employee complaints, except as provided below.

EXCEPTIONS

This policy shall not apply to:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination, including violations of Title IX (gender), Title VII (sex, race, color, religion, national origin), ADEA (age) or Section 504 (disability)
2. Complaints alleging certain forms of harassment, including harassment by a principal and violations of Title VII.
3. Complaints concerning retaliation relating to discrimination and harassment
4. Complaints concerning instructional materials
5. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District

FILING

Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, fax, or U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Fax filings shall be timely filed if they are received on or before the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the fax copy. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

RESPONSE

At Levels One and Two, "response" shall mean a written communication to the employee from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered or sent by U.S. Mail to the employee's mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. mail on or before the deadline.

DAYS

"Days" shall mean District business days, unless otherwise noted. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day a document is filed is "day zero." The following business day is "day one."

REPRESENTATIVE

"Representative" shall mean any person who or an organization that does not claim the right to strike and is designated by the employee to represent him or her in the complaint process.

The employee may designate a representative through written notice to the District at any level of this process. If the employee designates a representative with fewer than three days' notice to the District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the District's counsel. The District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

CONSOLIDATING COMPLAINTS

Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. Employees shall not bring separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint

When two or more complaints are sufficiently similar in nature and remedy sought to permit their resolution through one proceeding, the District may consolidate the complaints.

UNTIMELY FILINGS

All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.

If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the employee, at any point during the complaint process. The employee may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within ten days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

COSTS INCURRED

Each party shall pay its own cost incurred in the course of the complaint.

COMPLAINT FORM

Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the employee does not have copies of these documents, they may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the employee unless the employee did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed, but may be refilled with all the required information if the refilling is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

AUDIO RECORDING

As provided by law, an employee shall be permitted to make an audio recording of a conference or hearing under this policy at which the substance of the employee's complaint is discussed. The employee shall notify all attendees present that an audio recording is taking place.

LEVEL ONE

Complaint forms must be filed:

1. Within 15 days of the date the employee first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem. In most circumstances, employees on a school campus

LEVEL ONE (continued)

shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal; other District employees shall file Level One complaints with their immediate supervisor.

If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and hold a conference with the employee within ten days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The administrator shall provide the employee a written response within ten days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

LEVEL TWO

If the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level One response deadline.

Level TWO (continued)

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Level Two administrator. The employee may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the employee at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Superintendent or designee shall hold a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues presented by the employee at Level One and identified in the Level Two appeal notice. At the conference, the employee may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The Superintendent or designee may set time limits for the conference.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the employee a written response within ten days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the Superintendent or designee may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Superintendent or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

LEVEL TWO (continued)

If the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may appeal the decision to the Board.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level Two response deadline. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the employee of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the Board.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two complaint. The employee may request a copy of the Level Two record.

The Level Two record shall include:

1. The Level One record.
2. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
3. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

LEVEL THREE

If at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the employee notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.

The District shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law.

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation including an opportunity for the employee and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding *levels*

LEVEL THREE (continued)

In addition to any other record of the Board meeting required by law, the Board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three presentation. The Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the employee or the employee's representative, any presentation from the administration, and questions from the Board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio re-cording, or court reporter.

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may *give notice* of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board does not make a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two

South Texas Educational Technologies, Inc.
108802 (Local Policy)

PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS: EXHIBITS

The forms on the following pages are provided to assist the District in processing employee complaints/grievances.

- Exhibit A: Employee Complaint Form - Level One - 2 pages
- Exhibit B: Response to Level One Complaint - 1 page
- Exhibit C: Level Two Appeal Notice - 1page
- Exhibit D: Response to Level Two Appeal -1page
- Exhibit E: Level Three Appeal Notice - 1page
- Exhibit F: Board's Response to Level Three Appeal - 1 page

EXHIBIT A

EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT FORM - LEVEL ONE (Page 1 of 2)

To file a formal complaint, please fill out this form completely and submit it by hand delivery, fax, or U.S. Mail to the appropriate administrator within the time established in DGBA (LOCAL). All complaints will be heard in accordance with DGBA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) or any exceptions outlined therein.

1. Name _____

2. Address _____

Telephone number (____) _____

3. Position _____ Campus/Department _____

4. If you will be represented in voicing your complaint, please identify the person representing you.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone number (____) _____

5. Please describe the decision or circumstances causing your complaint (give specific factual details):

6. What was the date of the decision or circumstances causing your complaint?

7. Please explain how you have been harmed by this decision or circumstance:

EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT FORM - LEVEL ONE (Page 2 of 2)

8. Please describe any efforts you have made to resolve your complaint informally and the responses to your efforts:

With whom did you communicate?

On what date?

9. Please describe the outcome or remedy you seek for this complaint:

Employee signature

Signature of employee's representative

Date of filing

Complainant, please note:

A complaint form that is incomplete in any material way may be dismissed, but may be re-filed with all the required information if the re-filing is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

Attach to this form any documents you believe will support the complaint; if unavailable when you submit this form, they may be represented no later than the Level One conference. *Please keep a copy of the completed form and any supporting documentation for your records.*

EXHIBIT B

RESPONSE TO LEVEL ONE COMPLAINT

Date

Name of Complainant)

Address of Complainant

Dear _____

Having considered the complaint we discussed in our Level One conference on
(date), I have decided on the following response:

[Note: When preparing the letter, include only one of the following sentences.]

For the following reasons, I am unable to provide the remedy you seek:

I will take the following actions to grant the remedy you seek for your complaint:

Although I am unable to provide the full remedy you seek for your complaint, I will take the following actions to provide a partial remedy:

(signature of supervisor, principal, or other appropriate administrator)

Complainant, please note:

To appeal this response, you must file a written notice of appeal with the appropriate administrator within the time limit set in DGBA (LOCAL). The necessary forms are available at _____ during regular business hours.

EXHIBIT C

LEVEL TWO APPEAL NOTICE

To appeal a Level One decision or the lack of timely response after Level one conference, please fill out this form completely and submit it by hand delivery, fax, or U.S. Mail to the Superintendent or designee within the time established on DGBA (LOCAL). Appeals will be heard in accordance with DGBA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) or any exceptions outlined therein.

1. Name _____

2. Address _____

Telephone number (____) _____

3. Position _____ Campus/Department _____

4. If you will be represented in voicing your complaint, please identify the person representing you.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone number (____) _____

5. To whom did you present your complaint at Level One?

Date of Conference _____

Date you received a response to the Level One Conference _____

6. Please explain specifically how you disagree with the outcome at Level One:

7. Attach a copy of your original complaint and any documentation submitted at Level One.

8. Attach a copy of the Level One response being appealed, if applicable

Employee signature

Signature of employee's representative

Date of filing _____

EXHIBIT D

RESPONSE TO LEVEL TWO APPEAL

Date

Name of Complainant)

Address of Complainant

Dear _____

Having considered the appeal you presented at Level Two on

(date), I have decided on the following response:

[Note: When preparing the letter, include only one of the following sentences.]

I am unable to grant your appeal and have instructed (name) to find a resolution in keeping with the remedy you seek.

Although I am unable to fully grant your appeal, I have instructed (name) to take the following actions as a partial remedy to your complaint.

(signature of Superintendent or designee)

Complainant, please note:

To appeal this response, you must file a written notice of appeal with the appropriate administrator within the time limits set in DGBA (LOCAL). The necessary forms are available at _____ during regular business hours.

EXHIBIT E

LEVEL TWO APPEAL NOTICE

To appeal a Level Two decision or the lack of timely response after Level Two Conference, please fill out this form completely and submit it by hand delivery, fax, or U.S. Mail to the Superintendent or designee within the time established on DGBA (LOCAL). Appeals will be heard in accordance with DGBA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) or any exceptions outlined therein.

1. Name _____

2. Address _____

Telephone number (__) _____

3. Position _____ Campus/Department _____

4. If you will be represented in voicing your complaint, please identify the person representing you.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone number (__) _____

5. To whom did you present your appeal at Level Two?

Date of Conference _____

Date you received a response to the Level Two Conference _____

6. Please explain specifically how you disagree with the outcome at Level Two:

7. Do you want the Board to hear this appeal in open session? _____
Please be aware that the Texas Open Meetings Act may prevent the Board from granting a request for open session.

8. Attach a copy of your original complaint and any documentation submitted at Level One and a copy of your Level Two appeal notice.

9. Attach a copy of the Level Two response being appealed, if applicable

Employee signature _____

Signature of employee's representative _____

Date of filing _____

EXHIBIT F

BOARD'S RESPONSE TO LEVEL THREE APPEAL

Date

Name of Complainant)

Address of Complainant

Dear _____

Having heard the representation of your appeal at Level Three, the Board took the following action at its meeting on _____ (date):

{Note: When preparing the letter or announcing the decision at the Board meeting, include only one of the following sentences.}

We have denied the appeal and have upheld the decision made by the Superintendent (or designee) at Level Two.

We have granted the appeal and have instructed the Superintendent to find a resolution in keeping with the remedy you seek.

We have we partially denied and partially granted the appeal and have instructed the Superintendent as follows:

Sincerely,

President of the Board of Trustees

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Employees may be terminated, demoted, or suspended for just cause which may be generally described as any conduct, action, or inaction, arising from, connected with, or impacting on the employee's work, whether on or off duty, that is inconsistent with the employee's obligations to the employer; or conduct reflecting a disregard of the employer's interests, policies or procedures. Just cause includes, but is not limited to, inefficiency, unacceptable performance, incompetence, misconduct, negligence, insubordination, or conviction of a felony or misdemeanor under the provisions of the Criminal Offender Employment Act.

Although impossible to cite an all-inclusive list of actions, which constitute just cause, examples include but are not limited to:

1. Falsification of documents.
2. Threatening, assaulting, or abusive behavior towards a principal, student, employee, guest or customer of STET.
3. Sexual harassment of an employee, student, or guest of STET on or off campus which may explicitly or implicitly affect an employee's performance or unreasonably interferes with a person's employment or academic endeavors.
4. Jeopardizing the safety or health of an employee (including ones self) student, guest or customer of STET.
5. Dishonesty or intentional fabrication of events.
6. Negligent, incompetent, inefficient or unacceptable performance of duties.
7. Willful disregard of reasonable directives or policies or a defiant attitude of noncompliance toward regulations, directives or policies applicable to an employee.
8. Conduct that interferes with the efficient operation of STET.
9. Inability or unwillingness to perform the duties required of a position.
10. Possession or use of alcohol or illicit drugs, reporting to work under their influence, or being under their influence while on the job.
11. Possession or drug paraphernalia or stolen property.
12. Conviction or admission of a felony or certain misdemeanors.
13. Careless, negligent, improper, unauthorized, or malicious use of or theft of, property, equipment, or funds.
14. Abuse of privileges.
15. Failure to report for work or to timely report justifiable reason for absence to the department head or campus administrator.
16. Repeated tardiness or poor attendance.
17. Misconduct which adversely affects the interest or reputation of STET or its employees.
18. Any repetition of offenses which resulted in a reprimand, warning, demotion, notification of unacceptable performance or suspension.
19. Job abandonment.

Resignations

A classified employee who desires to terminate services with STET should submit a signed resignation statement to the appointing authority 2 weeks prior to the date of termination. Professional employees should give 30 days notice prior to the date of termination. If the employee is not available to sign or refuses to sign a statement, the principal should so note on the employee record and forward for processing. All benefit coverage's cease at midnight the date of termination. If an employee's separation from STET is less than 5 working days, seniority and other such employment privileges may be reinstated with approval from the Personnel Director. Employees may not appeal a resignation of voluntary termination even if the action was in lieu of termination.

Reports to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)

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:

1. Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other illegal conduct with a student or a minor
2. The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
3. The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of school property or funds
4. 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
5. Committing a crime on school property or at a school-sponsored event
6. Violating assessment instrument security procedures

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:

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

STUDENT ISSUES

Equal Educational Opportunities

The STET, Inc. 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.

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students on any of the basis listed above should be directed to the superintendent or the administrator of the campus.

Student Records

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records.

The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records:

1. 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.
2. The student (if 18 or older or emancipated by a court)
3. 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

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 central office can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint.

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

Administering Medication to Students

Only designated employees can administer prescription medication, nonprescription 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.

Psychotropic Drugs

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:

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

Student Discipline

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

Student Attendance

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