

SULPHUR SPRINGS  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

STAFF INFORMATION BULLETIN

2015-2016



## **FOREWORD**

This professional/paraprofessional staff member bulletin is prepared to provide information regarding state and local requirements and expectations and procedures relative to operations of schools in the Sulphur Springs Independent School District. Efforts have been taken to update information for this 2014/2015 school year. Each staff member is asked to review this information included in this bulletin in order to prevent misunderstandings, etc. Certain procedures/items related to specific campus operations will be addressed by campus administrator(s).

## **ADVISORY COUNCILS**

In compliance with Education Code 11.251 - 11.252 the District has established a district-and-campus-level planning and decision-making process that involves the professional staff of the district, parents, and community members in establishing and reviewing the district's and campuses' educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs.

## **ATTENDANCE OF STUDENTS**

In order to receive credit in a class, students must be in attendance for at least 90% of the semester. Students who are in attendance for less than 90% of the semester shall not be given credit for the class unless the attendance committee finds that the absence(s) is the result of extenuating circumstances or the student regains credit by making up the days missed.

## BOARD POLICIES

All Board Policies, including those that address harassment and employment issues for the Sulphur Springs Independent School District are available online. Staff members desiring to review these policies may access these policies at [www.ssisd.net](http://www.ssisd.net). Hard copies are available to all employees by sending a written request to the Human Resource Office. The following is a list of employment policies including (Legal) and (Local) policies and exhibits:

<u>Policy Code</u>	<u>Policy Title</u>
DA series	Equal employment opportunity, genetic nondiscrimination, criteria for personnel decisions
DBAA	Criminal history and credit reports
DBD	Conflict of interest
DC	Employment practices
DCB	Term Contracts
DEA series	Salaries and wages; incentives and stipends
DEC series	Leaves and absences
DF	Termination of employment
DFA series	Termination of, or return to, probationary contract
DFB series	Termination of term contracts
DFD	Hearings before hearing examiner
DFE	Resignation
DFF	Reduction in force
DFFA	Reduction in force due to financial exigency
DFFB	Reduction in force due to program change
DG	Employee rights and privileges
DGBA	Employee complaints/grievances
DH	Employee standards of conduct
DHE	Searches and alcohol/drug testing
DI	Employee welfare
DIA	Freedom from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation
DK	Assignment and schedules
DN series	Performance appraisal

## **CALENDAR FOR SCHOOL YEAR**

State Law and State Board of Education (SBOE) directives require the annual school calendar to provide for 180 instructional days and seven staff preparation days. Sulphur Springs ISD received a waiver from TEA for 5 additional staff preparation days and 3 early release days. The 2014/2015 school calendar will include 175 instructional days and 12 staff preparation days. The early release days will be September 12, 2014, October 3, 2014, November 7, 2014 and June 3, 2015. School will dismiss at 12:50 for students.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Discipline should be handled by the professional staff member to the extent possible. The staff member should confer with the student, principal, and parents in all unusual problems. Cooperation and understanding between the parents and the school can often eliminate problems before they develop into unpleasant situations.

Please refer to the SSISD STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT HANDBOOK for information related to the expected behavior of students as well as disciplinary actions that can or may be taken when a student is in violation of school rules.

The handbook follows guidelines set forth by Education Code Chapter 37, Subchapter A. Chapter 37 can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.tasb.org/services/policy/resources/safety.aspx#chapter37>.

## **DRESS AND GROOMING**

Staff members are expected to exhibit good taste and professional judgment in the selection of school apparel. As adults, district employees are expected to be an example to students in appearance. Jeans are permissible on "Dare to Dream" Wednesdays and Fridays only. Principals should seek prior approval for any exceptions in regard to field trips, playdays, etc. Staff members should follow good hygienic practices and exhibit good grooming.

## **DUTY FREE LUNCH PERIOD**

Each professional teacher is entitled to a 30-minute lunch period free from all duties and responsibilities connected with the instruction and supervision of students.

## **EVALUATIONS OF PERSONNEL**

The Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) developed by the Commissioner of Education has been selected as the teacher-appraisal system. The formal teacher appraisal shall include:

1. At least one classroom observation of a minimum of 45 minutes
2. A written summary of each observation
3. Completion of the Teacher Self-Report form
4. Cumulative data of written documentation collected
5. A written summative annual appraisal report
6. A summative annual conference

District teachers shall be appraised annually, except teachers who are eligible for less frequent evaluations in accordance with law and criteria stated in Board Policy DNA (Local).

## **EXTRA DUTIES**

Each campus has extra duties which must be performed in order to ensure the proper supervision of students outside the classroom. Professional and paraprofessional staff members are expected to assume and perform these responsibilities in a professional manner.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Staff members should initiate requests for field trips and excursions with the Principal. The Principal, in turn, may approve or disapprove the request. If transportation is involved, the Principal will submit the request to the Superintendent of Schools, or his designee, for his approval. Transportation requests should be submitted at least TEN days prior to need for transportation.

Elementary field trips will be limited to Hopkins County with the exception of one trip within a 50 mile radius of Sulphur Springs for grades 4 and above.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Board policy (DGBA) establishes procedures for the orderly processing of employee grievances. (A copy of grievance procedures is provided on-line.)

## **HAZARDOUS WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Should it become necessary for the school district to dismiss school due to weather conditions or other reasons, the following shall apply to all employees of the district: Information regarding the dismissal of school for students will be broadcast *over* Radio Stations KSST (1230 AM) and KDXE (96 FM) no later than 6:45 a.m. The Blackboard call-out system will also be used to notify staff and community.

## **INSURANCE BENEFITS**

The District and the state cumulatively pay \$225 toward premiums for medical insurance for each District employee. Employees desiring to add spouse and/or children to their coverage should contact the District's Business Office.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES**

Staff members should initiate requests for supplies through the Principal's office. The school district will assume no fiscal responsibility for merchandise or services purchased without a Purchase Order issued through proper channels.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXCHANGE TIME

The Professional Development Exchange Time Program allows credit for professional development opportunities which occur outside the designated school day and/or contractual period. The time spent on an approved professional development activity may be exchanged for a designated professional development day. These Exchange Days are identified in the current school calendar and must be earned after employment with SSISD.

Employees must earn 12 exchange hours (6 hours = 1 day). Hours may be accumulated in various ways:

- Required professional development based on campus initiatives and/or for individual growth
- Planned workshops sponsored by SSISD, Region VIII, or other approved outside professional development opportunity
- Approved Superintendent Book Study options

All approved trainings must relate directly to the employee's teaching field(s) and focus on improving student learning, serve to improve overall instructional skills, or coordinate with specific campus/district instructional goals.

### Rate of Earning Exchange Time

- Exchange Time credit in which the employee acts as a learner must be earned in no less than 2 hour training increments. (6 hours = 1 day)
- 226 Contract Administrators may choose to exchange vacation days with the attendance of professional development activities for waiver day credit.

### Examples of Acceptable Activities for Exchange Time credit:

- Approved conferences related to classroom teaching field (for coaches who teach an academic subject, 6 hours of Exchange Time credit must be in academic content area)
- College Course in educational field of study
- Region VIII Workshops
- SSISD Workshops
- Outside District Workshops
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### Examples of Unacceptable Activities for Exchange Time credit:

- Extra-curricular or co-curricular sponsoring activities, band critiquing, clinics, or competitions
- Annual required trainings such as Acceptable Use Policy/Copyright, Blood borne Pathogens, Bullying, Child Abuse, FERPA, etc.
- Faculty Meetings
- Professional development earned during the instructional school day, on a district identified professional development day or district identified early release day.
- Professional development for which the teacher earns a stipend.

### Instructional Technology Credit

Teachers and administrators are also required to earn 6 hours of instructional technology training, but this requirement does not require additional hours outside of a teacher's contract. Exchange time credit can count as instructional technology credit. The 6 instructional technology hours, however, are not required to be Exchange Time credit. These hours can be earned during regular duty hours.

## **LEAVES AND ABSENCES**

A state minimum personal leave program consisting of five days per year personal leave with no limit on accumulation and transferable among districts shall be provided for school district employees.

Employees also receive an additional 2 local leave days to be used for any reason. The prevailing substitute daily rate of pay shall be deducted from the employee's pay regardless of whether a substitute is employed. These 2 local leave days do not accumulate and are not transferable among districts.

In the event a teacher or paraprofessional is ill or an emergency arises, the employee should notify the Principal as soon as possible so an appropriate substitute, if applicable, can be acquired. Upon return to work, the employee should complete the necessary absence(s) form with the Principal.

In the event an administrator is ill or an emergency arises he/she shall notify the Superintendent of Schools or the immediate supervisor. Upon return to work, the administrator should complete the necessary absence(s) form with the Superintendent or immediate supervisor.

If all leave benefits have been used and no request for additional days has been made, a full day's salary will be deducted for each absence. (A copy of the Personal Leave policy is provided online at [www.ssisd.net](http://www.ssisd.net).)

## **LEAVING SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS**

Professional staff members should obtain authorization from the Principal when leaving assigned school campuses during work hours. This procedure will prevent many misunderstandings, etc., as well as protect the professional employee.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMUNICATIONS**

Instructional and administrative staff members are expected to notify a parent or guardian when, in his/her opinion, the student is performing or beginning to perform failing academic work or the student is displaying or beginning to display improper school conduct (poor attitude or classroom behavior-poor attendance--excessive tardiness, etc.) which could possibly lead to academic failure and/or serious disciplinary actions.

The purpose of the Progress Report is to advise the parent/guardian of the situation and to encourage his/her assistance in correcting the problem, etc. After reasonable efforts have been taken to involve the parent/guardian, the staff member or administrator need not continue if no response is received or the situation resolved. A Progress Report should be mailed at the end of the third week of each six weeks period if a student is failing.

Gradebook access is available to the parents of students in Grades 1 through 12 through Family Access in Skyward. Grades should be recorded in a timely manner so this information is current and up to date.

## **PAY DATES**

Professional and paraprofessional staff members receive their pay in twelve (12) equal monthly payments based upon the total contracted salary. Pay checks will be issued on the 26th of each month.

For your convenience, we offer direct deposit of monthly payroll checks. Your paycheck will be deposited into your personal bank account at the bank of your choice.

Pay checks shall reflect deductions for income taxes, teacher retirement, and other authorized items. Questions regarding salary, etc. should be directed to the Business Office at 885-2153, ext. 1144.

Other payroll deductible items which can be authorized include insurance and annuity payments with district approved companies.

## **PERSONNEL RECORDS**

Items listed below are required for all professional and paraprofessional employees before any salary payments will be authorized. These items are needed for salary computation, certification, and accreditation purposes and are checked frequently by TEA auditors. Please review these requirements and turn in the requested documents at the offices listed as soon as possible.

### **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT—ADMINISTRATION**

1. Current Contract. (Signed)
2. Professional/Paraprofessional Service Record.  
This record must be obtained in completed form from the school district of prior employment.  
(For beginning personnel, a record will be established by the District.)
3. Professional/Paraprofessional Certification.  
This is the district copy of the professional/paraprofessional certificate. It indicates the level and/or field of professional/paraprofessional certification. If employed under emergency, out-of-state, or special assignment permits, required materials must be in personnel records.
4. College Transcript(s).  
Transcript(s) must be validated by college seal and/or signature. Transcript(s) must denote degree(s) earned and dates. Paraprofessionals will present high school transcript, college transcripts, or GED certificates, etc.
5. Employee Commitment Form
6. Criminal History Consent
7. I-9 Form (Required as proof of U.S. Citizenship)
8. Social Security Statement



## **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

1. W-4 Form
2. Insurance Benefit Options

## **LESSON PLANS**

Professional instructional staff members shall prepare daily lessons in accordance with TEA and local guidelines. Daily lesson plans should briefly note the daily lesson objective, instructional methods/materials, and evaluation methods if applicable, and will be documented in Eduphoria Forethought. Plans should be prepared a week in advance so that a substitute teacher could carry on in an instructor's absence. Plans shall be periodically reviewed by campus administrators.

## **PLANNING PERIOD**

Each professional instructional staff member shall have uninterrupted planning and preparation period of 45 consecutive minutes each school day.

## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

Professional and paraprofessional staff members are encouraged to consider membership in professional and paraprofessional local, state, and national associations. The decision for membership rests solely with the employee.

Listed below are professional associations active within the District. Representatives of these associations and/or materials and information regarding membership will be available at the first campus level faculty meetings.

TSTA/NEA: The Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association is a unified professional association which provides educational leadership at state and national levels.

Hopkins County Teachers Association: The Hopkins County Teachers Association is the local unit of TSTA/NEA.

Texas Classroom Teachers Association-Sulphur Springs Chapter: The Texas Classroom Teachers Association is the largest independent professional organization in Texas with membership limited to classroom teachers. The Sulphur Springs Chapter is dedicated to cooperatively working with school administrators and the community in improving educational services and opportunities.

Association of Texas Professional Educators: The Association of Texas Professional Educators is a state professional association for administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals.

## **PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Sulphur Springs Independent School District expects its staff members to adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators. Critical remarks directed toward students, peers, and supervisory personnel often lead to mistrusts and unproductive relationships, and these situations serve no positive purposes. The common goal for professional existence is to offer the students of the District the most comprehensive educational opportunities possible. To accomplish this end, it is necessary that each employee in the District strive to be the very best professional he/she can

As a matter of respect and professionalism, no teacher is authorized to detain a student from another teacher's class or grant permission to a student to miss another teacher's class. Student detainment or absences of this nature may be requested and authorized only through the Principal, and efforts should be made to avoid a student's missing another class.

## **REASSIGNMENT REQUEST**

Administrative intra-district transfer procedures provide for the consideration of District professional and paraprofessional personnel with regard to other positions of employment. Personnel requesting consideration for transfer to another position within the District should obtain a Transfer Consideration Form from the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Administration.

## **REIMBURSEMENT FOR PURCHASES, TRAVEL, EXPENSES, ETC.**

The Sulphur Springs ISD will honor reimbursement requests only if the expenditure has had prior approval and requested according to established procedures. All requests of this nature must have receipts attached. Staff members should consult with the Principal regarding matters of this nature in order to receive reimbursement.

## **RETIREMENT**

The Board shall not require the retirement of any employee.

It is recommended that personnel considering retirement discuss the matter with the Superintendent of Schools several months in advance in order for the necessary procedures and actions to be completed. Prior planning can be to the advantage of the person who is retiring.

## **RESIGNATIONS**

Resignations of contracted personnel should be submitted in writing not later than the 45th day before the first day of the following school year. Board policy further states that an employee may resign with the consent of the Superintendent at any time mutually agreeable.

## **SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Staff members should attend and participate in as many school activities as possible. A teacher's presence projects support and interest to the students, the school, and the community.

Many staff members will be involved in school related organizations, clubs, etc. No school activities should be planned for Wednesday nights as this night is set aside for community religious activities.

Staff members should receive permission from Principals regarding the use of school facilities for school related meetings, etc.

## **STUDENT TEACHERS**

Sulphur Springs ISD partners with Texas A&M University-Commerce in a PK-12 student teacher program. Prospective elementary teachers spend up to a year working and studying in public school classrooms while earning their degrees and teaching certificates. Prospective secondary teachers spend up to a semester in preparation for the classroom. In this real world environment, A&M Commerce students work side-by-side with Sulphur Springs' classroom teachers. Students from the university also have the opportunity to be involved in field based experiences. Field based experiences enable students to gain an understanding of the expectations of teachers in a modern society so that students can make informed decisions on whether or not teaching matches his/her career aspirations.

## **TELEPHONE USAGE AT SCHOOL**

Professional staff members are expected to use reasonable judgment regarding the use of the school phone. When there is an emergency call for a teacher, the teacher will be called to the phone immediately; otherwise, the party will be requested to give a return number and advised that the teacher will return the call. The school phone is for school use only; its use for personal business matters is discouraged. The use of personal cellular phones is limited to conference/lunch periods. Classroom use is prohibited.

If a personal long distance call must be made on a school phone, the staff member should charge the call to his/her home number. The Business Office will not honor calls unless authorized and approved by the Principal as school related business.

## **TEXTBOOK RESPONSIBILITIES**

Professional staff members are responsible for the issuance, control, and use of textbooks by students. Textbooks should be checked regularly for covers, damages, etc. Please notify the Principal when a student loses or damages a book. Do not issue another textbook without authorization from the Principal's Office. Unissued textbooks should not be accessible to students. It is recommended that textbook numbers be recorded in teacher's grade books in the space provided.

## **TUTORIALS**

Each professional staff member shall assume responsibility for providing tutorial services to students in his/her classes. Students who are failing or in danger of failing shall be given priority regarding tutorial services. It is the responsibility of the staff member to notify parent(s)/guardian(s) when a student is in need of tutorial assistance. Notification should be made on district forms and verification of notice and attendance maintained. Tutorial services should be performed as outlined in Work Hours of this bulletin.

## **WELFARE OF EMPLOYEES (Drug-Free Schools Requirements)**

This District prohibits the unlawful distribution, possession, or use of illicit drugs and alcohol on school premises or as part of any of the District's activities.

Employees who violate this prohibition shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Such sanctions may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation programs or employee assistance programs, termination from employment with the District, and referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution.

Compliance with these requirements and prohibitions is mandatory and is a condition of employment.

Board policy DH (local) establishes standards of conduct for District employees. (A copy of Employee Standards of Conduct is provided on-line.) Hard copies are available to all employees by sending a written request to the Human Resource Office. (This notice complies with notice requirements imposed by the federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 20 U.S.C. 3224a and 34 CFR 86.201).

**WORK HOURS**

Campus personnel will adhere to a work schedule determined by the campus principal.

Central Administrative Staff Members	8:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.
Tax Office	8:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

School Day-Inservice/Workdays

All Professional/Paraprofessional Staff Members	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
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School Day – Instructional

High School	8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Middle School	8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Douglas	8:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.
SSES	8:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.
Bowie/Lamar/Travis	8:10 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.
ECLC	8:05 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.