

# Veribest

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

**HOME OF THE**



**FALCONS**

Parent-Student Handbook  
Code of Conduct  
2011-2012

# DIRECTORY INFORMATION

## Administration Office

325-655-4912

Michael Steck	Superintendent
Leah Zaruba	District Secretary
Denise Dusek	Business Manager
Bill Merry	Technology Director

## Secondary Campus

325-655-2851

Kenneth Newman	Secondary Principal
Tara Molina	Secretary

## Elementary Campus

325-655-2851

Wes Brown	Elementary Principal
Tara Molina	Secretary

## Board of Trustees

President	Dalena Freeman
Vice President	Vance Lankford
Secretary	Trish Bauerlein
Trustee	Bo Briley
Trustee	Toni Holik
Trustee	Ron Flavel
Trustee	Cassie Broz

## Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook

Dear Student and Parent:

The Veribest Independent School District has prepared this handbook so you may know the spirit, ideas, and objectives of Veribest ISD. We urge you to read this publication thoroughly and to discuss it among your family. If you have any questions about the information provided, we encourage you to ask for an explanation from the student's teacher, the school counselor, or campus administrator.

My child and I have been offered the option to receive a paper copy of or to electronically access at [www.veribestisd.net](http://www.veribestisd.net) the Veribest Independent School District Student Handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct* for 2011-2012.

I have chosen to:

- Receive a paper copy of the Student Handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*.
- Accept responsibility for accessing the Student Handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct* by visiting the Web address listed above.

I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the *Student Code of Conduct*. If you have any questions regarding this handbook of cod, I should direct those questions to the principal at 325-655-2851.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work/Other Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete this form (front and back) and return to the student's school.**

# SIGNATURE SHEET

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## PUBLICATIONS, VIDEO, INTERACTIVE TV AND INTERNET CONSENT

(Mark a response **ONLY** if you are denying permission)

\_\_\_\_\_ **NO**, I do not want my child's name, picture, artwork, voice, or picture (video or still) to appear in any school publicity or publication (**including school yearbook**), school videos, or website.

\_\_\_\_\_ **NO**, I do not want my child's name, picture, artwork, or picture (video or still) to appear in any school publicity or publications, school videos, or website **but including any of these in the school yearbook is permitted.**

**Please Note:** If you mark the first "NO", your student **can not be included** in any honor rolls or printed photos in recognition for honors or achievements that he/she may have received and may **not** be included in the yearbook. The second "NO", will permit inclusion in the yearbook only. If you have no objections to your child being included in any of these areas, please leave both responses unmarked.

## Student Participation Form

I (**give**) (**do not give**) my child, \_\_\_\_\_ permission to participate in any extracurricular and/or co-curricular activities during the 2011-2012 school year at Veribest ISD. This includes field trips, athletic trips, vocational trips, and any other educational trips that might be planned during the year.

## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT CONSENT FORM

\_\_\_\_\_ I **will allow** the school district to administer corporal punishment to my child.

\_\_\_\_\_ I **will not allow** the school district to administer corporal punishment to my child.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information**

State law requires the district to give you the following information:

**Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want Veribest Independent School District to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction at this school.**

This means that the district must give certain personal information (called "directory information") about your child to any person who requests it, unless you have told the district in writing not to do so. In addition, you have the right to tell the district that it may, or may not; use certain personal information about your child for specific school-sponsored purposes. The district is providing you this form so you can communicate your wishes about these issues. [See **Directory Information** on page 10 for more information.]

**For the following school-sponsored purposes: Veribest ISD has designated the following information as directory information:**

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- E-mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Most recent school previously attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team

Directory information identified only for limited school-sponsored purposes remains otherwise confidential and will not be released to the public without the consent of the parent or eligible student.

**Please complete the back of this form and return to the student's school.**

**Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:**

I, parent of \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name), **(do give) (do not give)** the district permission to use the information in the above list for the specified school-sponsored purposes.

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**For all other purposes, Veribest ISD has designated the following information as directory information:**

- Student's name
- Photograph
- Major field of study
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height, of a member of an athletic team

**Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:**

I, parent of \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name), **(do give) (do not give)** the district permission to release the information in this list in response to a request unrelated to school-sponsored purposes.

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**RELEASE FORM for DISTANCE LEARNING CLASSROOM**

\_\_\_\_\_ I (we) understand that in a distance learning classroom, while taking a virtual field trip, taking a college course, or interacting with other students or educators, my voice, physical presence, and participation in classroom activities will be transmitted to distance learning sites. I (we) hereby agree that my voice, presence, and participation in these classes will not be a violation of my person rights and hereby release any claims for the use of such during the duration of the distance learning class.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Student Information to  
Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**

Federal law requires that the district release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon request, the name, address, and phone number of secondary school students enrolled in the district, unless the parent or eligible student directs the district not to release information to these types of requestors without prior written consent. [See **Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education** on page 10 for more information.]

**Parent:** Please complete the following only if you **do not** want your child’s information released to a military recruiter or an institution of higher education without your prior consent.

I, parent of \_\_\_\_\_, request that the district **not** release my child’s name, address, and telephone number to a military recruiter or institutions of higher education upon their request without my prior written consent.

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete this form (front and back) and return to the student's school.**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF USER AGREEMENT FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE  
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS AND INFORMATION RESOURCES**

**Parent or Guardian Section**

Each user authorized to access the District computers, networks, telecommunications, Internet services, or other resources is required to sign an acknowledgement form (CQ Exhibit E) or the Student Handbook stating that they have read policy CQ and these rules. Agreements from students will be maintained in campus records, as will Agreements from parents and volunteers.

I have read the Acceptable Use Policy for Veribest Independent School District (VISD). I hereby release the Veribest Independent School District (VISD), its personnel, and any institutions with which it is affiliated from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my child's use of, or inability to use, the district networking system, including, but not limited to claims that may arise from the unauthorized use of the system to purchase products or services.

I will instruct my child regarding any restrictions against accessing materials that are in addition to the restrictions set forth in the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). I will emphasize to my child the importance of following the rules for personal safety.

By checking the boxes below, I GRANT/DENY permission for my child as the boxes designate. My signature certifies that the information contained in this form is correct.

My child **MAY** work on the Internet and access World-Wide Web at school.

My child **MAY NOT** work on the Internet and access the World-Wide Web at school.

My child's name and photo/video **MAY** be placed on the district/school website.

My child's name and photo/video **MAY NOT** be placed on the district/school website.

My child's name and work **MAY** be placed on the district/school website.

My child's name and work **MAY NOT** be placed on the district/school website.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby acknowledge that I have received information related to the User Agreement for Acceptable Use of the Electronic Communications Systems and Information Resources (commonly known as "Acceptable Usage Policy") as required on Board Policy CQ (LEGAL) and CQ (LOCAL). I further acknowledge that I have been offered the option to receive a paper copy of said agreement or to electronically access them. I agree to review the Acceptable Usage Policy by accessing the web sites provided or by requesting, in writing, a paper copy from the appropriate department.

**Veribest ISD  
226-908**

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT  
EXHIBIT D**

**CQ  
(EXHIBIT)**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF USER AGREEMENT FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE  
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS AND INFORMATION RESOURCES**

**User Signature Required**

Each user authorized to access the District computers, networks, telecommunications, Internet services, or other resources is required to sign an acknowledgement form (CQ Exhibit D) or the Employee or Student Handbook stating that they have read policy CQ and these rules. As a condition of continued employment, employees, consultants, and contractors must annually sign an acceptable usage policy or Veribest ISD Employee Handbook. The acknowledgement form will be retained in the employee's personnel file or in the Technology Department's files. Agreements from students will be maintained in campus records, as will Agreements from parents and volunteers.

I hereby acknowledge that I have received information related to the User Agreement for Acceptable Use of the Electronic Communications Systems and Information Resources (commonly known as "Acceptable Usage Policy") as required on Board Policy CQ (LEGAL) and CQ (LOCAL). I further acknowledge that I have been offered the option to receive a paper copy of said agreement or to electronically access them. I agree to review the Acceptable Usage Policy by accessing the web sites provided or by requesting, in writing, a paper copy from the appropriate department.

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Printed Legal Name

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Staff or Student ID Number (not applicable if you are not a staff member or a student)

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Campus/Location or Company Name

---

Role: Student, Volunteer, or Employment Position

---

Date

---

User Signature



**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT  
CQ  
EXHIBIT C  
(EXHIBIT)**

**USER AGREEMENT FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC  
COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS AND INFORMATION RESOURCES**

The Veribest Independent School District (the “District”) is pleased to make available to employees (faculty, staff, consultants, contractors, temporary-hires, and others), students, and approved parent users access to the interconnected computer information systems within the District (the “Network”) and to the world-wide network that provides various means of accessing significant and varied materials and opportunities (commonly known as the “Internet”). (This User Agreement applies to employees if and when they are granted access. That access may be granted to the extent that the District determines appropriate, based on the specific employee’s job duties or other factors.)

In order for the District to be able to continue to make its Network and the Internet access available, all users must take responsibility for appropriate and lawful use of this access. Users must understand that one person’s misuse of the District technology hardware or software, Network and/or the Internet access may jeopardize the ability of all to enjoy this access. While the District’s management and Network administrators will make reasonable efforts to administer use of the Network and Internet access, they must have user cooperation in exercising and promoting responsible use of this access.

This document is the Electronic Communication Systems and Information Resources Acceptable Use Policy (the “Policy” or “AUP”) of the District and also relates to Internet and other access or service providers (collectively, the “Provider”) as they provide resources necessary for the District to provide the Network and Internet access. Upon accepting your account information, you are agreeing to follow this Policy, and you will then be given the opportunity to enjoy Network and Internet access. If you have any questions about this Policy, you should contact the District Technology Department.

If any user (that is, you or anyone whom you allow to use your account—which itself is a violation) using your account violates this Policy, your access will be denied or withdrawn. Students who violate the policy also will be subject to school discipline; employees will be subject to additional disciplinary action, up to and including, termination

**1. Personal Responsibility**

- a. By accepting your account password and other information from the District and accessing the Network or the Internet, you are agreeing to follow the rules in this Policy. You are also agreeing to report any misuse of access to the Network or the Internet to your building principal or division head. Misuse means any violations of this Policy, or any other use that, while not included in this Policy, has the effect of harming another or another’s property.
- b. You are responsible for any activity that occurs under the use of your account login. If you leave your device or user account unattended and logged in with the device unlocked, and inappropriate activity occurs, you may be held responsible for that activity. You may not give your login information to another user. (Exception: you may provide it to technical support personnel for tech support purposes but then you are responsible for changing your password after they assist you and resolve your issue.) You may not log into a computer or program and allow another user to utilize your account.

- c. If you utilize school District equipment and/or software outside of the District, you must still follow the Veribest ISD Technology AUP rules while utilizing the school District's resources. (example: if you take a laptop home or offsite and access the internet, it is forbidden to surf for porn, gambling, etc.)

## **2. Unauthorized Equipment Installation**

Personal or other purchased equipment not expressly authorized by the Director of Technology or designee will not be installed on the Network. Prohibited equipment is defined as any network attached items including, but not limited to: hubs, switches, routers, wireless access points, splitters, network printers, key loggers, and personal PCs, laptops. Additions of any type of these items are prohibited. Persons who introduce these devices on the Network will be subject to denial of access, and disciplinary actions, including termination for employees.

## **3. Term of the Permitted Use**

After you have been granted access and as long as you follow this Policy, you will have Network and Internet access during the term of your enrollment or employment with the District. (Please be aware that the District may suspend access at any time for technical, policy, failure to sign and return the AUP receipt form or student handbook receipt form or other reasons.)

## **4. Purpose and Use**

- a. Veribest ISD Technology Hardware and Software, Network, Internet Access and any other technology related items are provided to staff and students primarily for official business use. Misuse can result in disciplinary actions and possibly termination. If you have any doubt about whether a contemplated activity is appropriate for District business purposes, you may consult with your building principal or division head to help you decide if a use is appropriate.
- b. Remember, access to Veribest ISD computer resources is a privilege, not a right. Failure to comply with the guidelines set out in the AUP may result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and other disciplinary action consistent with District policies. Student users should refer to the Student Code of Conduct for a detailed description of the consequences of improper use of the computer system.

## **5. Computing and Software Usage**

- a. Software will be used only in accordance with its license agreement. Unless otherwise provided in the license, any duplication of copyrighted software, except for backup and archival purposes by the Technology Director or designee, is a violation of copyright law. In addition to violating copyright law, unauthorized duplication of software is contrary to the District's standards of conduct. The following points are to be followed to comply with software license agreements:
  - 1. All users must use all software in accordance with license agreements and the District's software regulation. All users acknowledge that they do not own this software or its related documentation, and, that unless expressly authorized by the software publisher, may not make additional copies except for archival purposes.
  - 2. The District will not tolerate the use of any unauthorized copies of software or fonts in our school system. Any person illegally reproducing software can be subject to civil and criminal penalties including fines and imprisonment. According to the U.S. Copyright Act, illegal reproduction of software is subject to civil damages of as much as U.S. \$100,000 per title infringed, and criminal penalties, including fines of as much as U.S. \$250,000 per title infringed, and imprisonment of up to five years. A District user, who makes, acquires, or uses unauthorized copies of software will be disciplined as appropriate under the circumstances.

Such discipline may include termination of employment. The District does not condone the illegal duplication of software and will not tolerate it.

3. No user will give software or fonts to any outsiders, including consultants, suppliers, contractors, and others. Under no circumstances will the District use software that has been brought in from any unauthorized location under the District's policy, including, but not limited to, the Internet, home, friends, and colleagues without approval from the Technology Director or designee. Any user who determines that there may be a misuse of software within the District will notify the Director of Technology, building principal, and/or division supervisor.
  4. All software used by the District on District-owned computers will be purchased through appropriate procedures.
  5. Generally, District-owned software cannot be taken home and loaded on an employee's home computer if it also resides on a District computer. If an employee is required to use software at home, the appropriate cost center manager will purchase a separate package and record it as a District owned asset in the software register with the Technology Department. However, some software companies provide in their license agreements that home use is permitted under certain circumstances. If an employee is required to use software at home, he or she must first consult with the Technology Department, unless allowed under the software's license agreement, to determine if appropriate licenses allow for home use. The Technology Department will conduct a yearly audit (at least once a year), of all District PCs and servers, including portables, to ensure that the District is in compliance with all software licenses. Random audits may be conducted as well. Audits may be conducted using an auditing software product. The full cooperation of all users is required during audits.
- b. Employee use of handheld computing/communication devices (e.g. personal digital assistants (PDA), smart phones, WAP phones, and other personal communication devices) that use any medium to synchronize, transmit, share, or access files on remote computer or server is permitted with some limitations. Synchronization with Microsoft Outlook calendars, contacts, messages, and notes is permitted. Employees who possess District e-mail accounts may access their account via their handheld computing/communication device. The specific details of this privilege are outlined in the next section.
  - c. The District is not responsible for maintaining, repairing, or otherwise troubleshooting an employee's personal cellular or other electronic devices. The District is not responsible for damage, corruption, modification, and/or deletion of any personal data stored on any employee-owned handheld computing/communication device. Furthermore, the District makes no guarantees of service quality or access regarding handheld devices. Modems or wireless broadband wireless devices inside or connected to office desktop computers (PCs) are not permitted, unless specifically authorized by the Director of Technology. Home based, mobile and/or telecommuting computers are an exception to this rule.
  - d. Computer equipment supplied by the District must not be altered or added to in any way (e.g., upgraded processor, expanded memory, or extra circuit boards) without prior knowledge and authorization from the Technology and Information Services Department. Unauthorized system changes or components may be removed by Technology Department. On District-supplied computer hardware, workers must not change the operating system configuration or install new software. If such changes are required, they will be performed by Technology Department personnel.
- 6. Accessing District Internet, E-mail, or Other District Resources via Cellular Phone or other Handheld Communication Device**

- a. Employees who choose to access the District’s Internet or their own District e-mail accounts on their personal handheld communication device (e.g., cell phone, Palm Pilot, etc.) may do so subject to the following restrictions and requirements.
- b. The same standards of proper and professional use of the District Internet and District e-mail system apply (including the entirety of this Policy, as well as any provisions applicable from Board Policy (CQ (LEGAL), CQ (LOCAL)), or Employee Handbook, and any other applicable rules or policies) regardless of whether the District services at issue are accessed via District computer or personal device.
- c. Use of personal cell phones or other handheld communication devices for business purposes should be limited. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner when corresponding as employees of the District, and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action where the behavior or conduct is school related (example: sending threatening text messages to a coworker from a personal cell phone).
- d. Although employees are permitted to use their cell phones to access District e-mail and for other acceptable business purposes, a cell phone should not be used in place of the employee’s District computer or telephone. Personal cell phones may be used for school business calls, including parent contacts, only during planning periods and other off-duty times during the work day. [See Employee Handbook]. Personal cellular phones should be used for school business only when District telephone and computer access is not readily available. Employees who use other functions of personal cell phones for business purposes (e.g., sending text messages to other employees concerning business, or sending text messages or e-mail containing personally identifiable student information), should limit such use to those instances when other forms of communication are not readily available. An employee who allows the use of his or her cell phone to interfere with the performance of job duties may be subject to discipline. [Consult Employee Handbook for consequences of such conduct].
- e. The District strongly encourages employees who choose to use personal communication devices for business purposes to protect those devices with “password protection”, blocking any unauthorized users access to its contents. An employee who accesses his or her District e-mail from a cell phone should make a report to the District Technology Department immediately if the cell phone is lost or stolen. The possibly delicate and/or confidential information which could be present on the cell phone is of immediate concern to the District.
- f. Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the District’s electronic communications system by students and employees shall not be considered private. The District reserves the right to monitor access to and use of District email, District Internet, or other network or computer-related activity, engage in routine computer maintenance and housekeeping, carry out internal investigations, prepare responses to requests for public records, or disclose messages, data, or files to law enforcement authorities. Monitoring shall occur at any time to ensure appropriate use.
- g. **Reminder: As an employee of a public school district, your communications regarding District business may be subject to public information act requests. Consider this possibility before sending any communication from a cell phone, or other similar device, which contains information or issues of District business.**

## 7. Networking and Internet Usage

- a. Employees using District accounts are acting as representatives of Veribest ISD. As such, employees should act accordingly to avoid damaging the reputation of the school District. The

introduction of viruses, spyware, adware, malware, any malicious code or tampering with any computer system, is expressly prohibited. Files that are downloaded from the Internet must be scanned with virus detection software before installing or execution. All appropriate precautions should be taken to detect for a virus and, if necessary, to prevent its spread.

- b. The truth or accuracy of information on the Internet and in e-mail should be considered suspect until confirmed by a separate (reliable) source. Users shall not place Veribest ISD material (copyrighted software, internal correspondences, etc.) on any publicly accessible Internet computer without proper permission. Alternate Internet Service Provider (ISP) connections (such as AOL dial-up) to the District's internal network are not permitted unless expressly authorized and properly protected by a firewall or other appropriate security device(s).
- c. Unless otherwise noted, all software on the Internet should be considered copyrighted work. Therefore, users are prohibited from downloading software and/or modifying any such files without permission from the copyright holder.

## **8. Electronic Messaging Communications and Voice Mail Systems**

- a. The District's voice communications and voice mail systems are designed to assist us in better serving stakeholders, enhancing internal communications, and reducing unnecessary paperwork. These guidelines should govern your use of District equipment, with special attention to unified messaging (email, voice mail, facsimiles and video mail.)
- b. Privacy is not assured in e-mail, facsimiles, video mail, or voice mail messages, whether a password is used or not. The Telecommunications Manager must have access to all program related passwords at all times, to ensure necessary access to the system. Misuse of passwords or the unauthorized use of another employee's password will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The District may access all employees' messages at any time.
- c. E-mail messages are like paper documents: Ask yourself whether you would want anyone else knowing about the content, or whether a conversation would be more appropriate.
- d. **Reminder: E-Mail is subject to public information act requests (PIA) and is admissible in court in some cases. Keep in mind when you compose an e-mail message that it could possibly be read by anyone or could appear in the local newspaper if requested via a PIA request.**
- e. Be careful when sending sensitive data via e-mail. It may need to be password protected and possibly encrypted. Review the requirements of HIPAA and FERPA laws which prohibit disclosure of certain student information. Electronic/Voice mail usage must conform to the District's policies against harassment and discrimination. Messages containing defamatory, obscene, offensive, or harassing information, or messages that disclose personal information without authorization, are prohibited. If you receive such unsolicited messages, you are to delete them promptly and not forward them.
- f. Chain-type messages and executable graphics also should be deleted and not forwarded--they cause overload on our network system. Employees engaging in the transmission of inappropriate electronic messaging, as determined by the District, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. For further information regarding the District's policy against sexual and other unlawful harassment, refer to the student code of conduct or the employee manual.

- g. When using e-mail, users should use “e-mail etiquette.” For example, avoid the use of all capital letters, as this is considered to be shouting at someone electronically. If you create private mail groups, it is your responsibility to review them periodically so they remain current. The Technology Department will have responsibility for generating and maintaining public mail distribution lists.
- h. Users should be mindful of District regulations regarding e-mail retention periods. It is your responsibility to archive any messages that you do not wish to be automatically deleted.
- i. E-mail and Internet access should not be overused or misused. Misuse of electronic access (i.e., work time spent online for personal use, copying or downloading copyrighted materials, visiting inappropriate sites, online banking, day trading/stock trading, online dating, online gambling, participating in online auctions, etc.) may result in discipline.
- j. Employees and vendors must not make arrangements for, or actually complete installation of voice or data lines with any carrier, if they have not first obtained approval from the Director of Technology or designee.

## **9. Information Security and Access**

- a. All users (including third parties) are responsible for the activity performed with their personal user-IDs, whether or not these user-ID’s are connecting via external network facilities. User-IDs must never be shared with associates, friends, family members, or others. User-IDs may not be utilized by anyone but the individuals to whom they have been issued. Similarly, users are forbidden from performing any activity with user-IDs belonging to other individuals (excepting authorized anonymous user-IDs like “guest”). With the exception of the District intranet, users must not browse through District computer systems or networks. For example, curious searching for interesting files and /or programs in the directories of other users is prohibited. Steps taken to legitimately locate information needed to perform one’s job are not considered browsing. This statement on browsing does not apply to external networks such as the Internet.
- b. Confidential information never should be sent over the Internet without the knowledge that it can be intercepted. This includes the transmission of documents containing District financial information, human resource information, student information, or Social Security Numbers. Use extreme caution to ensure that the correct e-mail address is used for the intended recipient(s). If you are sending a document that contains sensitive information, it is recommended that you secure the document; for example, via password, encryption, use of secure socket transfer, etc.

## **10. Prohibited Use**

The user is responsible for his/her actions and activities involving District computers, networks, and Internet services, and for his/her computer files, passwords and accounts. General examples of unacceptable uses which are expressly prohibited include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Any use that is illegal or in violation of other board policies, including harassing, discriminatory or threatening communications and behavior; violations of copyright laws, etc. - *See Addendum 17: Cyberbullying*;
- b. Any use involving materials that are obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit or sexually suggestive;
- c. Any inappropriate communications with students or minors;
- d. Any use for private financial gain, or commercial, advertising or solicitation purposes;
- e. Any use as a forum for communicating by e-mail or any other medium with other school users or outside parties to solicit, proselytize, advocate or communicate the views of an individual or

nonschool sponsored organization; to solicit membership in or support of any non-school sponsored organization; or to raise funds for any non-school sponsored purpose, whether profit or not-for-profit.

- f. No employee shall knowingly provide school e-mail addresses to outside parties whose intent is to communicate with school employees, students and/or their families for non-school purposes. Employees who are uncertain as to whether particular activities are acceptable should seek further guidance from the building principal or other appropriate administrator.
- g. Any communication that represents personal views as those of the District or that could be misinterpreted as such;
- h. Downloading or loading software or applications without permission from the system administrator;
- i. Opening or forwarding any e-mail attachments (executable, batch, and/or script files) from unknown sources and/or that may contain viruses or malicious software;
- j. Sending mass e-mails to District users or outside parties for school or non-school purposes without the permission of the system administrator [or other designated administrator].
- k. Any malicious use or disruption of the District's computers, networks, and Internet services or breach of security features;
- l. Any misuse or damage to the District's computer equipment;
- m. Misuse of the computer passwords or accounts (employees, students, or other users);
- n. Any communications that are in violation of generally accepted rules of network etiquette and/or professional conduct, including the use of profanity or vulgar, obscene or sexually explicit language;
- o. Any attempt to access inappropriate/unauthorized sites (i.e. Internet/Websites, intranet websites, and/or application servers);
- p. Failing to report a known breach of computer security to the system administrator;
- q. Executing, using, or viewing any application or website that is resource intensive, resulting in excessive network saturation and denial-of-service for other users;
- r. *Users* using District computer networks are prohibited from gaining unauthorized access to any information system or network to which they have not been expressly granted access. *Users* using District computer networks are also prohibited from in any way damaging, disrupting, or interfering with the operations of multi-user information systems to which they are connected. Likewise, *users* are prohibited from capturing or otherwise being in possession of passwords, encryption keys, or any other access control mechanism that has not been expressly assigned to them. *Users* are furthermore prohibited from possessing or using software tools which could provide unauthorized access to system resources (these include password dictionary attack programs, encryption key brute-force discovery programs, and software for defeating copy-protection mechanisms). These actions are defined as "Hacking" and are in direct violation of the District Acceptable Use Policy.
- s. Using school computers, networks, and Internet services after such access has been denied or revoked;
- t. Any attempt to delete, erase, or otherwise conceal any information stored on a school computer that violates these rules;
- u. Use that violates this Policy, the student code of conduct or the employee standards of conduct;
- v. Unauthorized disclosure, use, or distribution of personally identifiable information or personal identification regarding students or employees;
- w. Personal or political use to advocate for or against a candidate, office-holder, political party, or political position. Research or electronic communications regarding political issues or candidates shall not be a violation when the activity is to fulfill an assignment for class credit;
- x. Participating in chat rooms other than those approved, sponsored and/or overseen by the District;

- y. and/or the use of personal devices such as PDA's (Palms, Visors, cell phones with web capability, etc.) and laptops (either wireless or Ethernet) or any device used to access Veribest ISD Networks is prohibited unless this Policy provides otherwise.

#### **11. No Expectation of Privacy**

- a. Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by students and employees shall not be considered private. Employees have no expectation of privacy in their use of District computing and network resources, including electronic messaging (e-mail), online chatting, any stored files, etc.
- b. The District reserves the right to monitor, track, and report access to and use of District e-mail, the Internet, or other network or computer-related activity, engage in routine computer maintenance and housekeeping, carry out internal investigations, prepare responses to requests for public records, or disclose messages, data, or files to law enforcement authorities. Monitoring by designated District staff shall occur at any time to ensure appropriate use.

#### **12. Confidentiality of Information**

Employees are expected to use appropriate judgment and caution in communications concerning students and staff to ensure that personally identifiable information remains confidential. When engaging in written communication regarding any student, employees should avoid using the student's name or ID number, and instead should use the student's initials if possible.

#### **13. Staff Responsibilities to Students**

Teachers, staff members, and volunteers who use District computers for instructional purposes with students must supervise such use. Teachers, staff members and volunteers are expected to be familiar with the District's policies and rules concerning student computers and Internet use and to enforce them. When, in the course of their duties, employees/volunteers become aware of student violations, they are expected to stop the activity and inform the building principal [or other appropriate administrator].

#### **14. Compensation for Losses, Costs and/or Damages**

Users shall be responsible for any losses, costs or damages incurred by the District related to violations of policy CQ and/or these rules.

#### **15. No Responsibility for Unauthorized Charges, Costs, or Illegal Use**

The District assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges made by users, including but not limited to credit card charges, subscriptions, long distance charges, equipment and line costs, online gambling charges or debts, or for any illegal use of its computers such as copyright violations. Therefore, the District will hold the user liable for the user's actions.

#### **16. Addendum: Policy on Social Media for School Employees**

In accordance with (IAW) **DH(Local)-X** (*Employee Standards of Conduct*), issued 8/11/2010.

##### **a. Computer Use and Data Management (Policy CQ)**

- 1. Access to the District's electronic communications system, including the Internet, is available to employees for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations. Access to the District's electronic communications system is a privilege, not a right. All users will be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of all administrative regulations governing use of the system and will agree in writing to allow monitoring of their use and to comply with such regulations and guidelines. Noncompliance may result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and other disciplinary action

consistent with District policies. Violations of law may result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the District. For a complete listing of the Veribest ISD technology acceptable use policy, please access the following link: <http://www.veribestisd.net/>

2. Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by employees are not private and may be monitored at any time by designated District staff to ensure appropriate use.

**b. Personal Use of Electronic Media (Policy DH)**

1. 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., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.
2. 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 an employee's use of electronic media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for Web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.
3. An employee who uses electronic media for personal purposes shall observe the following:
  - a. The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the District's computers, network, or equipment.
  - b. The employee shall not use the District's logo or other copyrighted material of the District without express, written consent.
  - c. 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:
    - d. Confidentiality of student records. [See Policy FL]
    - e. Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]
    - f. Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses. [See Policy GBA]
    - g. Copyright law [See Policy EFE]



- b. The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity.)
  - c. The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page (“professional page”) for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee’s professional page.
  - d. The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., unless an extracurricular emergency exists. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
  - e. The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
  - f. 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, including:
    - 1. Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
    - 2. Copyright law [Policy EFE]
  - g. Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct, a romantic relationship, or other inappropriate social relationship with a student. [See Policies DF and DH]
  - h. Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently-enrolled students.
  - i. Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue all forms of electronic one-to-one communication with students. An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor with an explanation of the need for the exception.
- d. User Acknowledgement Required**
- Each user authorized to access the District computers, networks, telecommunications, and Internet services is required to sign an acknowledgement form (CQ Exhibit D), or the Employee or Student Handbook stating that they have read policy CQ and these rules. As a condition of continued employment, employees, consultants, and contractors must annually sign an acceptable usage policy or Veribest ISD Employee or Student Handbook. The acknowledgement form will be retained in the employee’s personnel file or in the Technology Department’s files. Agreements from students will be maintained in campus records, as will Agreements from parents and volunteers.

## **17. Addendum: Cyber Bullying**

In accordance with (IAW) **CQ(Legal)** (*Electronic Communication and Data Management*), issued **8/11/2010** and (*The Children's Internet Protection Act*); in compliance with Texas House Bill 2003.

**Texas House Bill No. 2003** - A BILL TO BE ENTITLED AN ACT: relating to the creation of the offense of online harassment.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

**SECTION 1.** Chapter 33, Penal Code, is amended by adding Section 33.07 to read as follows:

### **Sec. 33.07. ONLINE HARASSMENT.**

(a) A person commits an offense if the person uses the name or persona of another person to create a web page on or to post one or more messages on a commercial social networking site:

- (1) without obtaining the other person's consent; and
- (2) with the intent to harass, embarrass, intimidate, or threaten any person.

(b) A person commits an offense if the person sends an electronic mail, instant message, text message, or similar communication that references a name, domain address, phone number, or other item of identifying information belonging to any person:

- (1) without obtaining the other person's consent; and
- (2) with the intent to cause a recipient of the communication to reasonably believe that the other person authorized or transmitted the communication.

(c) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor, except that the offense is a felony of the third degree if the actor commits the offense with the intent to harm or defraud another.

(d) If conduct that constitutes an offense under this section also constitutes an offense under any other law, the actor may be prosecuted under this section, the other law, or both.

(e) In this section:

(1) "Commercial social networking site" means any business, organization, or other similar entity operating a website that permits persons to become registered users for the purpose of establishing personal relationships with other users through direct or real-time communication with other users or the creation of web pages or profiles available to the public or to other users. The term does not include an electronic mail program or a message board program.

(2) "Identifying information" has the meaning assigned by Section 32.51.

**SECTION 2.** This Act takes effect September 1, 2009.

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## PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2011-2012! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The Veribest Independent School District Student Handbook is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into two sections:

**Section I—PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**—with information to assist you in responding to school related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook.

**Section II—OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**—organized alphabetically by topic for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term “the student’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Veribest Independent School District *Student Code of Conduct*, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found on the district's website at [www.veribestisd.net](http://www.veribestisd.net) or available in the principal’s office.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters or other communications.

In case of conflict between board policy including the *Student Code of Conduct* and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the current provisions of board policy or the *Student Code of Conduct* are to be followed.

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact a teacher, the counselor, or the principal.

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus the following required forms:

1. Parental Acknowledgment Form
2. Student Directory Information Form and Release of Student Information Form;
3. Release of Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Learning
5. Student Acceptable Use Policy.

[See **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights** on page 3 and **Directory Information** on page 10 for more information].

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district's policy manual is available for review in the school office, located at 10062 FM HWY 380 or available online at [www.veribestisd.net](http://www.veribestisd.net).

## **SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This section of the Veribest ISD Student Handbook includes information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

### ***PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT***

#### **Working Together**

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child once your child begins enrolling in courses that earn high school credit.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 20 and **Academic Programs** on page 14.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 325-655-2851 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 46.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policies at GKG and contact the school office.
- Participating in campus parent organizations.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact the Principal's Office at 325-655-2851.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council(SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. [See policies at

BDF,EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** on page 37.]

- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

## **Parental Involvement Coordinator**

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title 1 program is Tara Molina and may be contacted at 325-655-2851

## ***PARENTAL RIGHTS***

### **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights**

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student’s eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For further information, see policy EF (LEGAL).]

### **“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities**

As a parent, you have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for your child’s participation in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect

the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA.]

### **Inspecting Surveys**

As a parent, you may inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.

### **Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff**

You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

### **Reviewing Instructional Materials**

As a parent, you have a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.

### **Displaying a Student's Artwork and Projects**

Teachers may display students' work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement. However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying students' artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and the like on the district's Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication.

### **Accessing Student Records**

You may review your child's student records. These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,

- Other medical records,
- Teacher and counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns, and
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child.

[See Student Records on page 8.]

### **Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student**

As a parent, you may grant or deny any written request from the district to make a video or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

- When it is to be used for school safety;
- When it relates to classroom instruction or a co curricular or extracurricular activity;
- When it relates to media coverage of the school.

### **Granting Permission to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction**

As a parent, if your child is under the age of 14, you must grant permission for your child to receive instruction in the district’s parenting and paternity awareness program or your child will not be allowed to participate in the instruction. This program, developed by the office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE), is incorporated into the district’s health education classes.

### **Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom**

You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate in conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.

### **Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags**

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. [See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 44 and policy EC(LEGAL).]

### **Excusing a Student from Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence**

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a

portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK (LEGAL).]

## **Requesting Limited or No Contact with a Student through Electronic Media**

Teachers and other approved employees are permitted by the district to communicate with students through the use of electronic media within the scope of the individual's professional responsibilities. For example, a teacher may set up a social networking page for his or her class that has information related to class work, homework, and tests. As a parent, you are welcome to join or become a member of such a page.

An employee described above may also contact a student individually through electronic media to communicate about items such as homework or upcoming tests.

If you prefer that your child not receive any one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee, please submit a written request to the campus principal stating this preference.

## **Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct**

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child's misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO (LEGAL) and the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

## **School Safety Transfers**

As a parent, you have a right:

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the board to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education code 25.0341. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the superintendent for information. [See policy FDB.]  
[See Bullying on page 15, and policy FFI(LOCAL).]
- To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDE(LOCAL).]
- To request the transfer of your child to another campus if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. [See policy FDE.]

## **Parents of Students with Disabilities**

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request that any other student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus. [See policy FDB(LOCAL).]

## **Request for the Use of a Special Animal**

A parent of a student who uses a service animal because of the student's disability must submit a request in writing to the principal at least ten district business days before bringing the service animal on campus.

## **Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education Services**

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students including a process based on Response to Intervention. The implementation of Response to Intervention has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of school districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If the evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide informed written consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of his or her rights if the parent disagrees with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services is the counselor at 325-655-2851.

## **Parents of Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other than English**

A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English. If the student qualifies for these extra services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

## **Accommodations for Children of Military Families**

Children of military families will be provided flexibility regarding certain district requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements.
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement.
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities.
- Graduation requirements.

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent related to leave or deployment activities may be excused by the district. The district will permit no more than 5 excused absences per semester for this purpose.

Additional information may be found at <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/mil/>.

## **Student Records**

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older OR who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records. Release is restricted to:

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records.

Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18, is emancipated by a court, or enrolls in a post-secondary institution, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and under limited circumstances when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

- District school officials who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.
- Various governmental agencies.
- Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to

enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

Release to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The address of the Superintendent's office is 10062 FM HWY 380, Veribest, TX 76886.

The address(es) of the principals' offices are the same.

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the principal or superintendent. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading policy. [See FINALITY OF GRADES at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 46 and **Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns** on page 18 for an overview of the process.]

The district's policy regarding student records found at FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) is available from the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's Web site [www.veribestisd.net](http://www.veribestisd.net).

The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

**Please note:**

Parents or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with federal law regarding student records. The complaint may be mailed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW

## **Directory Information**

The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about students as “directory information.” This “directory information” will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it. The district has designated the following categories of information as directory information for school-sponsored purposes: student name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, and date and place of birth, as well as major field of study; degrees, honors, and awards received; dates of attendance; grade level; most recent educational institution attended; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and weight and height of member a of an athletic team.

The district has designated the following categories of information as directory information for non-school-sponsored purposes: student's name; photograph; major field of study; degrees, honors and awards received; grade level; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and weight and height of a member of an athletic team.

The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about students as "directory information." This "directory information" will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, release of a student’s directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child’s first day of instruction for this school year. [See the “Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Student Information” included in this handbook OR included in the forms packet.]

## **Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes**

The district often needs to use student information for the following school-sponsored purposes: [list of school-sponsored purposes can be found in your FL(LOCAL)].

For these specific school-sponsored purposes, the district would like to use your child’s name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, and date and place of birth, as well as major field of study; degrees, honors, and awards received; dates of attendance; grade level; most recent educational institution attended; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and weight and height of a members of an athletic team. This information will not be used for other purposes without the consent of the parent or eligible student, except as described above at **Directory Information**.

Unless you object to the use of your child’s information for these limited purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time the district wishes to use this information for the school-sponsored purposes listed above.

## **Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**

The district is required by federal law to comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for students’ names, addresses, and telephone listings, unless

parents have advised the district not to release their child's information without prior written consent. A form has been attached for you to complete if you do not want the district to provide this information to military recruiters or institutions of higher education.

## **SECTION II: OTHER INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become *familiar* with the various issues addressed in this section. It is conveniently organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact Veribest ISD at 325-655-2851.

### **ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws—one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit—are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

#### **Perfect Attendance**

In order for students to receive perfect attendance honors or awards a student must be in attendance in every period of the scheduled class day, unless a student is participating in a school sponsored activity.

#### **Compulsory Attendance**

State law requires that a student between the ages of six and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year and is subject to compulsory attendance laws, if the student is under 21 years old. In addition, if a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See Policy FEA]

#### **Students enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten are required to attend school.**

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of a diagnostic reading instrument.

A student in grades 3-8 will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program,

which may occur before or after school during the summer, if the student does not meet the passing standards on the state assessment for his or her grade level and applicable subject area.

## **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance**

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of **absences if the student makes up all work**. These include the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Service as an election clerk; and
- Documented health-care appointments, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's return to campus.

In addition, a junior or senior student's absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided the student receives approval from the campus principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed. Documentation will not be accepted unless prior approval has been granted. Any unauthorized college visit absences will be unexcused.

## **Failure to comply with Compulsory Attendance**

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction (termed "accelerated instruction" by the state) assigned by a grade placement committee and basic skills for ninth graders; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student:

- Is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

If the student is age 18 or older, the student's parents shall not be subject to penalties as a result of their child's violation of state compulsory attendance law. [See Policy FEA(LEGAL)]

## **Attendance for Credit**

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal

that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit for the class.

If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed a plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit, if appropriate. [See policies at FEC]

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credit will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

## **Parent's Note after an Absence**

### **Excused Absences**

Of course, there are times that children are sick or have other legitimate reasons for being absent from school. Regardless of the age of your child, if she or he is sick and will not be at school that day, you should call the school office to let them know of the absence. Whenever a child is absent from school for any reason, she or he must bring a note signed by you explaining the reason for the child's absence when she or he returns to school. The principal or someone acting for the principal will make the final decision whether an absence is classified as excused or

unexcused. You are encouraged to call by 9:00 a.m. if your child is absent.

If the child does not, within **three** days of the absence, bring a note signed by the parent describing the need for the absence, the absence will be classified as unexcused. Students ordinarily will not be permitted to make up missed work for credit if the absence is unexcused. It is the student's responsibility to provide adequate documentation of absences. School personnel will not make phone calls or initiate correspondence to obtain confirmation of doctor's office visits or other appointments. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older.

**Doctor and Dental Appointments:** Absences for appointments with doctors, dentists, orthodontists, physical therapists, and other health care professional will be classified as excused absences if the student returns to school on the same day as the appointment and presents a note from the health care provider stating the time of the appointment and the time the student left the doctor's office. If the appointment is at the end of the school day and the student has been at school all day up to that time, the absence will be excused if the student brings a note from the health care provider the following day.

### **Doctor's Note After an Absence for Illness**

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than 5 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absences from school.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school.

[See policy FEC(LOCAL).]

### **Driver License Attendance Verification**

For a student between the ages of 16 and 18 to obtain a driver license, the Texas Department of Public Safety must provide written parental consent to access the student's records for purposes of verifying 90 percent attendance for credit for the semester. The student can obtain this form at the campus principal's office.

### **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

The school counselor provides students and parents information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. [For more information, see **Academic Counseling** on page 20 of this handbook and policies at EIF.]

### **AWARDS AND HONORS**

National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society

Membership in the National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society is both an honor and responsibility. Students selected for membership are expected to continue to demonstrate the qualities of scholarship, services, leadership, and character by which they were selected; however, students may not apply for membership in the National Honor Society or National

Junior Honor Society. Membership is granted only to those selected by the faculty council in each school.

Membership for NHS may be open to qualified sophomores, juniors and seniors who have been enrolled for the equivalent of one semester and NJHS may be open to qualified 8th and 9th graders. These students are then eligible for consideration on the basis of leadership, services, and character.

Leadership is based on the student's participation in community or school activities, or election to an office. To meet the service requirement, the student must have been active in service projects in the school and community. Character is measured in terms of integrity, behavior, ethics, and cooperation with both students and faculty.

Once selected to the National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society, members have the responsibility to continue to demonstrate the qualities of scholarship, leadership, service and character. Members who resign or are dismissed are never again eligible for membership or its benefits.

Students can be dismissed from the NHS or NJHS if they do not maintain the standards of the organization. Serious violations of school rules, such as cheating on exams, may lead to dismissal.

## ***BULLYING***

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students directs written or verbal expressions or physical conduct against another student and the behavior results in harm to the student or the student's property, places a student in fear of harm to himself or his property, or is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

Bullying could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, assault, demands for money, confinement, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, and ostracism. In some cases, bullying can occur through electronic methods, called "cyberbullying."

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, counselor, principal, or another district employee. The administration investigation indicates that bullying has occurred.

[Also see **School Safety Transfers** on page 6, **Hazing** on page 35, and policy FFI(LOCAL).]

## ***CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS***

The district offers career and technical education programs in Business, Agricultural Science, and Family and Consumer Services. Admission to these programs is based on student's grade level and their desire to take the class.

Veribest ISD will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and CTE programs.[Also see Nondiscrimination Statement on page 44 for additional information regarding the district's efforts regarding participation in these programs.]

## **CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, which may be accessed at the district office. As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

A child who has experienced sexual abuse should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that disclosures of sexual abuse may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse, and it is important to be calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

As a parent, your child is a victim of sexual abuse, the campus counselor or principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) also manage early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention and Early Intervention/Programs Available In Your County/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention%20and%20Early%20Intervention/Programs%20Available%20In%20Your%20County/default.asp).

The following Web sites might help you become more aware of child sexual abuse:

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index.aspx?id=2820>

<http://sapn.nonprofitoffice.com/>

<http://www.taasa.org/member/materials2.php>

[http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG%20Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml)

[http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG%20Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml)

Reports may be made to:

The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400 or on the Web at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>).

## **CLASS RANK / HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT**

In determining Valedictorian and Salutatorian, the semester grades are considered for ranking purposes taken during the four years will be counted up to the progress reporting date of the sixth six weeks of the senior year which will be used to determine the average for graduation ranking. Students electing to graduate early or in 6 (six) terms are not eligible for Valedictorian or Salutatorian Honors. To compete for Valedictorian and Salutatorian honors, a student must complete the final two years of high school at Veribest High School.[See policy EIC(LOCAL).]

All classes will be calculated for class ranking except: local credit courses, credit by exam, PE/Athletics, Office (Teacher) Aides, and TAKS Remediation Classes.

## **Advanced Courses**

The following classes will have 10 points added per semester to the final numeric grade calculation for the calculating of class rank only: Spanish III, Pre-calculus, and Dual Credit (not online classes). The 10 points will only show in the students GPA (**will not show on report card or transcript**).

## **CLASS SCHEDULES**

To ensure compliance with State laws regarding attendance requirements for award of credit for high school courses, strict guidelines are adhered to regarding requests for changes to student's schedules. Students may complete a schedule change request form and schedule an appointment with the principal. Schedule change requests will be approved by the principal in accordance with applicable State graduation and attendance requirements, as well as other criteria including course availability and class size consideration. All schedule change requests must be signed by the parent prior to their appointment with the principal.

## **COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS**

For two school years following his or her graduation, a district student who graduates in the top ten percent and, in some cases, the top 25 percent of his or her class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the student:

- Completes the Recommended or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program; or
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

In addition, the student must submit a completed application for admission in accordance with the deadline established by the college or university.

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. For students who are eligible to enroll in the University of Texas at Austin during the summer or fall 2012 term, the University will be admitting the top nine percent of the high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through an independent review process.

Should a college or university adopt an admissions policy that automatically accepts the top 25

percent of a graduating class, the provisions above will also apply to a student ranked in the top 25 percent of his or her class.

Students and parents should contact the counselor or high school principal for further information about the application process and deadlines.

[See also, Class Rank/Highest Ranking Student on page 17 for further information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class].

## **COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES**

Students in grades 9-12 have opportunities to earn college credit through the following methods:

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), or International Baccalaureate (IB);
- Enrollment in an AP or dual credit course through the Texas Virtual School Network;
- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with approved college or university;
- Enrollment in courses taught at the following institutions in the district: approved college or university; and
- Certain CTE courses.

All of these methods have eligibility requirements and must be approved prior to enrollment in the course. Please see the counselor for more information.

It is important to keep in mind that not all colleges and universities accept credit earned in all dual credit or AP courses taken in high school for college credit. Students and parents should check with the prospective college or university to determine if a particular course will count toward the student's desired degree plan.

## **COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office [or on the district's Web site at [www.veribestisd.net](http://www.veribestisd.net)].

In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the teacher (if applicable) or the campus principal within 10 days of the events or situation of concern. If the concern is not resolved with the teacher, a request for a conference should be sent to the principal. To ensure the concern is resolved at the earliest possible level, the complaint should be recorded in writing on the request form provided before the formal meeting with the principal. The principal will schedule a conference and give the parent or student a written or oral response within seven days after the conference. If the matter remains unresolved at this point, a written complaint and a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees. Forms must be completed requesting each conference.

## **CONDUCT**

### **Applicability of School Rules**

As required by law, the board has adopted a *Student Code of Conduct* that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as campus and classroom rules. The *Student Code of Conduct* can be found at the back of this handbook.

### **Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling the student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct* and policy FO(LOCAL) in the district’s policy manual.

Corporal Punishment may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Corporal punishment will be limited to spanking or paddling the student, and governed by the following conditions:

1. The student is told of the reason corporal punishment is being given.
2. The principal in the principal's office may give corporal punishment.
3. Corporal punishment shall be done in the presence of one other District professional employee out of view of other students.
4. Parent permission or denial of corporal punishment must be filed in the Principal’s office.
5. A record shall be maintained of each instance of corporal punishment.

### **Disruptions of School Operations**

Disruptions of school operations are not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offence. As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud

noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.

- Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district.

## **Social Events**

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

## ***CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS***

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Department of State Health Services regarding these diseases.

## ***COUNSELING***

### **Academic Counseling**

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in grades 6 through 11 will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities.

To plan for the future, each student should work closely with the counselor in order to enroll in the high school courses that best prepare him or her for attendance at a college, university, or training school, or for pursuit of some other type of advanced education. The counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

### **Personal Counseling**

A school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the counselor should make an appointment.

## **Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment**

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

[For more information, refer to Policies EHBAA(LEGAL) FFE(LEGAL) and FFG(EXHIBIT).]

## ***COURSE CREDIT***

A student in grades 9-12 will earn credit for a course only in the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-semester (1credit) course, the student's grades from both semesters will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. Should the student's combined average be less than 70, the student will be required to retake the semester in which he or she failed.

## ***CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course***

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit for it—may, in circumstances determined by the principal, or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school.

The counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject.

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an exam.

[For further information, see the counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL).]

## ***CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course***

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has had no prior instruction or to accelerate to the next grade level. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2011-2012 school year are available from the counselor.

A student will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 90 on the exam. A student in elementary school will be eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if the student scores at least a 90 on each exam in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the principal no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. The district [will or will not] honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the student's parent will be responsible for the cost of the exam. [For further information, see EEJB(LOCAL).]

No student will be allowed to take more than 2 courses credit by exam.

## ***DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION***

The district believes that all students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. [See policy FFH]

### **Dating Violence**

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that negatively affects the student.

### **Harassment**

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or at [www.veribestisd.net](http://www.veribestisd.net).

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to

property.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student is prohibited.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

## **Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Retaliation against a student might occur when a student receives threats from another student or an employee or when an employee imposes an unjustified punishment or unwarranted grade reduction. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other students or negative comments from a teacher that are justified by a student's poor academic performance in the classroom.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. See policy FFH(LOCAL) for the appropriate districts officials to whom to make a report.

## **Investigation of Report**

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district.

In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary

action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

## ***DISCRIMINATION***

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation on page 22.]

## ***DISTANCE LEARNING***

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state-required essential knowledge and skills but are taught through multiple technologies and alternative methodologies such as mail, satellite, Internet, video-conferencing, and instructional television.

The Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) has been established as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TxVSN to earn course credit for graduation. In limited circumstances, a student in grade 8 may also be eligible to enroll in a course through the TxVSN. Depending on the course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the “no pass, no play” rules. [Also see Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations on page 28.]

If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child be enrolled in a TxVSN course, please contact the counselor.

A maximum of 2 credits may be earned through correspondence courses except with principal approval.[For further information, see policies at EEJC.]

If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the TxVSN in order to earn credit in a course or subject, the student must receive permission from the principal prior to enrolling in the course or subject. If the student does not receive prior approval, the district will not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

## ***DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS***

### **School Materials**

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

[See **Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes** on page 10.]

### **Nonschool Materials...from students**

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before posting, circulating, or distributing written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or

organization. The decision regarding approval will be made within two school days.

The principal has designated the office area as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by students. [See policies at FNAA.]

A student may appeal a principal's decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who posts non-school material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Materials displayed without the principal's approval will be removed.

### **Nonschool Materials...from others**

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policy GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the Superintendent for prior review. The Superintendent will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA, FNG, or GF.]

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a non-curriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All non-school materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

### **DRESS AND GROOMING**

The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

- The student shall be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean and neat and that will not be a health or safety hazard to themselves or others. The District prohibits any clothing or grooming that in the principal's judgment may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interfere with normal school operations.
- Students may not wear, as outer clothing; any clothing that is designed to be worn as an undergarment. At no time should undergarments be visible. Pajamas are not acceptable. Blankets and pillows are not acceptable.

- Students may not wear muscle shirts, half shirts, fish net type mesh shirts, halter tops, or sheer shirts or blouses. All shirts and blouses must be of sufficient length as not to expose the midriff and should be appropriately buttoned. Sleeveless shirts must have fabric between the arms and neck that is three fingers width wide.
- Walking shorts may be worn. The hem of the shorts, skirts, and dresses must be fingertip length.
- Students may not wear excessively tight, low-cut, or body form-fitting clothing.
- Any apparel that advertises or implies sex, drugs, tobacco, alcohol, profanity, violence ect. is NOT permitted.
- Students may not wear clothing that has holes or in a poor state of repair
- Loose fitting pants that hang onto the buttocks or baggy pants are not acceptable school attire.
- Shoes must be worn at ALL times. House shoes are not permitted.
- No head coverings of any type will be worn inside the school building by either male or female students, except for extra-curricular activities or those approved by the principal.
- Boys may not wear earrings or have facial hair. Girls may wear earrings by no more than three per ear. Students may not wear nose rings or piercings in any other body parts besides the ear. These will be taken up and kept until the end of the school year or until the parent comes to pick it up.
- Students should avoid extremes in hairstyles that attract so much attention they interfere with the classroom learning environment. Boys' hair should not be worn longer than the top of the collar and may not go below the bottom of the ear on the sides.
- Tattoos are required to be covered.
- Wearing school issued uniforms outside of school-sponsored athletic activities is not allowed

It is impossible to list all the acceptable and unacceptable types of dress and grooming and therefore, a judgment decision must be made at certain times. If the principal or principal's designee determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student will be subject to disciplinary actions stated in the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Homecoming week, Red Ribbon Week, ect., may have dress code modifications applied.

## ***ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES***

### **Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones**

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other

portable computers.

The use of mobile telephones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event.

**If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device could be confiscated. The student or parent may pick up the confiscated mobile telephone from the principal's office for a fee of \$15 as per Texas Education Code section 37.082.**

Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parents will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE.]

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See Searches on page 50 and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. The district will not be responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

### **Possession and Use of Other Personal Electronic Devices**

Except as described below, students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices such as MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, e-readers, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See Searches on page 50 and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. The district will not be responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

### **Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices**

In some cases, students may find it beneficial or might be encouraged to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must obtain prior approval before using personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional use. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (included in this handbook). When students are not using the devices for approved instructional purposes, all devices must be turned off during the instructional day. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

### **Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources**

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in the use of district-owned technology resources for instructional purposes; specific resources may be issued individually to students. Use of these technological resources, which include the district's network systems and use of district equipment, is restricted to approved purposes only.

Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (included in this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and their parents should be aware that e-mail using district computer is not private and will be monitored by District staff. [For additional information, see policies at CQ.]

**Note: Please notify the campus in writing within 72 hours of the receipt of this handbook if you do not wish for your student to participate in the district's Internet connections. If the district does not receive a written statement to this effect, it will assume the student is granted permission to participate.**

## **Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources**

Students are prohibited from sending, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement.

## ***END-OF-COURSE (EOC) ASSESSMENTS***

See Course Credit on page 21, Grading Guidelines on page 31, Graduation on page 31, and Standardized Testing on page 51.

### **Fall Semester:**

All students will be required to take semester exams.

### **Spring Semester:**

All students will be required to take either STARR, End of Course or Final exams.

## ***EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS***

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. [See <http://www.uil texas.edu> for additional information.]

The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic

class—other than an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or language other than English—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to 10 absences not related to post-district competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

### **Standards of Behavior**

Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the *Student Code of Conduct* or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

[For further information, see policies at FM and FO. For student-organized, student-led groups, see **Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups** on page 49.]

### **Offices and Elections**

The Veribest Junior and Senior High Student Councils oversee class officer nominations and selections.

### **FEES**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.

- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that requires use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school.
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the principal. [For further information, see policies at FP.]

- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN0).

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the principal. [For further information, see policies at FP.]

## ***FUND-RAISING***

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the principal at least 10 days before the event.

Fund-raising by non-school organizations is not permitted on school property, unless approved by the principal or superintendent. [For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.]

## ***GANG-FREE ZONES***

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

## **GRADE CLASSIFICATION**

After the ninth grade, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation.

Credits Earned	Classification
7	Grade 10 (sophomore)
14	Grade 11 (Junior)
19	Grade 12 (Senior)

## **GRADING GUIDELINES**

Grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated and distributed to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines have been reviewed by each applicable curriculum department and have been approved by the campus principal. These guidelines establish the minimum number of assignments, projects, and examinations required for each grading period. In addition, these guidelines establish how the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (i.e., letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, ect.). Grading guidelines also outline in what circumstances a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination for which the student originally made a failing grade.

State law requires a student's score on an end-of-course (EOC) assessment to count as 15 percent of the student's final grade for the course.

Also see Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences on page 46 for additional information on grading guidelines. See Graduation below, Course Credit on page 21, and Standardized Testing on page 51 for additional information regarding EOC assessments.

## **GRADUATION**

### **Requirements for a Diploma**

To receive a high school diploma from the district, a student must successfully

- Complete the required number of credits
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state; and
- Depending on the year in which the student is scheduled to graduate, pass a statewide exit-level exam or achieve the required cumulative scores on end-of-course (EOC) assessments.

The exit-level test, currently required for students in grade 11, covers English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and requires knowledge of Algebra I and Geometry; Biology and Integrated Chemistry and Physics; English III; and early American and United States History, World History, and World Geography.

Students in grades 10 and 11 during the 2011-2012 school year must pass the exit-level test to graduate. A student in grade 12 who has not passed the exit-level test will have opportunities to

retake it.

Also, see Standardized Testing on page 51 for more information.

Beginning with students who enter grade 9 in the 2011-2012 school year, EOC assessments will be administered for the following courses and will replace the exit-level tests as mentioned above: English I, English II, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, World Geography, World History, and United States History. Students graduating under the Minimum Program must take EOC assessments only for courses in which they are enrolled and for which there is an EOC assessment. Each student will be required to achieve certain scores on the applicable EOC assessments to graduate, depending on the graduation program in which the student is enrolled. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments.

If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, the district will provide remediation to the student in the content area for which the performance standard was not met.

Also see Grading Guidelines above and Standardized Testing on page 51 for more information.

## **Graduation Programs**

The district offers the graduation programs listed below. All students entering grade 9 are required to enroll in the Recommended Program. Permission to enroll in the Minimum Program will be granted only if a written agreement is reached among the student, the student's parent or person standing in parental relation, and the counselor or appropriate administrator. In order for a student to take courses under the Minimum Program, the student must be at least 16 years of age; have completed at least two credits each in English language arts, math, science, and social studies courses that are required for graduation; or have failed grade 9 one or more times. [See policy EIF(LEGAL).]

Effective with ninth graders in 2011-2012 school year, in addition to the credit and course requirements for each program, performance on EOC assessments will be linked to a student's eligible graduation program. To graduate, a student must meet a minimum cumulative score set by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for each content area: English, mathematics, science, and social studies. To determine whether the student meets the cumulative score, the student's EOC assessment scores in each content area will be added together. If the student's total score on the assessments within the content area is not equal to or greater than the cumulative score set by TEA, the student may retake any of the assessments in that content area until the student achieves the cumulative score. A student who does not make the minimum required score on any individual assessment will be required to retake that assessment.

To graduate on the Recommended Program, a student must perform satisfactorily on the Algebra II and English III EOC assessments, in addition to meeting the cumulative score requirements described above.

All students must meet the following credit and course requirements for graduation under the programs listed:

Courses	Number of credits Minimum Program	Number of credits Recommended Program
English/Language Arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4
Science	2 or 3	4
Social Studies	2.5 or 3.5	3.5
Economics	0.5	0.5
Physical Education	1	1
Speech	0.5	0.5
Language other than English		2
Fine Arts	1 (effective grade 9 in 2010-2011 school year and thereafter)	1
Locally required courses		
Electives	7.5 credits (prior to 2010-2011) 6.5 credits (2010-2011 and thereafter)	5.5 credits
Miscellaneous		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22 credits</b>	<b>26 credits</b>

Please be aware that not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the district. A student who wants to take a course not offered at his or her regular campus should contact the counselor about a transfer or other alternatives. If the parents of at least 22 students request a transfer for those students to take a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or CTE, the district will offer the course for the following year either by teleconference or at the school from which the transfers were requested.

### **Certificates of Coursework Completion**

A certificate of coursework completion will be issued to a student who has successfully completed state and local credit requirements for graduation but has not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on the state-mandated tests required for graduation.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, a student with disabilities may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her individualized education program (IEP).

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school, but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

[See FMH(LEGAL).]

Please also be aware that if an ARD committee places a student with a disability on a modified curriculum in a subject area, the student will be automatically placed in the Minimum Program, in accordance with state rules.

If a student receiving special education services is scheduled to graduate under the Minimum Program or in accordance with the provisions of his or her IEP, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the general EOC assessment is an accurate measure of the student's achievement and progress or whether an alternative assessment is more appropriate. STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate are the alternative assessments currently allowed by the state. [See STANDARIZED TESTING for additional information.] If a student takes the STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate assessment, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the score on an EOC assessment will count as 15 percent of a student's final grade, as well as whether successful performance and a cumulative score on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation.

## **Graduation Activities**

Graduation activities will include commencement exercises. Students who have met coursework requirements for graduation but have not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on exit-level tests or end-of-course assessments will be allowed to participate in graduation activities. However, please keep in mind that participating in the activities and ceremonies is not synonymous with graduating. Ultimately, the final awarding of a diploma will be contingent upon the student's completion of all applicable requirements for graduation.

## **Graduation Expenses**

Because students and parents will incur expenses in order to participate in the traditions of graduation—such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture—both the student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. [See **Fees** on page 29.]

## **State Scholarships and Grants**

Under the Texas Early High School Graduation Scholarship Program, students who complete the Recommended High School Program may earn financial credits in varying amounts to apply

toward college tuition. The amounts depend on the number of consecutive months in which the student completed graduation requirements and the number of early college credits earned and may be used at public or private higher education institutions within the state. The counselor can provide additional information about meeting the program's eligibility requirements.

Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the Recommended High School Program may be eligible under the T.E.X.A.S. Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions. [For further information, see the principal or counselor and policy EJ(LEGAL).]

## ***HARASSMENT***

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 22.]

## ***HAZING***

Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act occurring on or off campus directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated to, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include other students.

Hazing will not be tolerated by the district. If an incident of hazing occurs, disciplinary consequences will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent.

[Also see Bullying on page 15 and policies FFI and FNCC.]

## ***HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS***

### **Bacterial Meningitis**

State law specifically requires the district to provide the following information:

- What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

- What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple

spots. These can occur anywhere on the body. The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

- What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>.

## **Physical Activity for Students in Elementary and Middle School**

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, [and FFA], the district will ensure that students in kindergarten through grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week.

Students in middle or junior high school shall engage in [30 minutes of moderate or vigorous

physical activity per day for at least four semesters OR at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within a two-week period for at least four semesters].

For additional information on the district's requirements and programs regarding elementary and middle school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

### **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)**

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held 4 meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the school nurse. [See also policies at BDF and EHAA.]

The duties of the SHAC range from recommending curriculum to developing strategies for integrating curriculum into a coordinated school health program encompassing school health services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, recess recommendations, and employee wellness. See policies at BDF and EHAA.

### ***Other Health-Related Matters***

#### **Physical Fitness Assessment**

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3–12. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to the Athletic Director to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

#### **Vending Machines**

The district has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines see the principal. [See policies at CO and FFA.]

#### **Tobacco Prohibited**

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products by students and others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the *Student Code of Conduct* and policies at FNCD and GKA.]

#### **Asbestos Management Plan**

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, is available in the Superintendent's office. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Steck at 325-655-4912.

#### **Pest Management Plan**

The district applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may

contact the Superintendent at 325-655-4912.

## ***HOMELESS STUDENTS***

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Counselor at 325-655-2851.

## ***HOMEWORK***

Education is a lifelong process that extends beyond the school. It is important that students recognize that learning occurs in the home and community. Homework is one means of teaching the necessary skills of independent study and learning outside of school. A broad definition of homework is considered here to include not only written work, but also related activities such as viewing specific television programs, news reporting, recreational reading, and other activities that are related to classroom work, but which are assigned to be done at home.

### **Purpose of Homework:**

1. to complete work started at school
2. to expand and/or enrich regular class work
3. to build interest in reading and learning
4. to make up work missed due to absence
5. to encourage parents awareness of student learning
6. to provide an opportunity to pursue special interest or ability areas
7. to increase learning time
8. to establish and reinforce independent study skills
9. to strengthen basic skills
10. to develop initiative, responsibility and self direction
11. to stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time

### **Homework Responsibilities**

Teachers:

1. Homework assigned will depend on the discretion of each teacher based on knowledge of the student's individual ability, awareness of home conditions, and the practice of good learning theory.
2. Homework should be the independent practice of an effectively taught skill.
3. Homework should be given with a purpose that is understood by both teacher and student.
4. It is important that homework be within the student's capability.
5. Homework assignments should be planned to include a wide variety of activities in all areas of the curriculum.
6. Students should have readily available to them all books and materials required to complete the assigned work.
7. Homework assignments are not to be given as busy work or for disciplinary reasons.
8. Evaluation of homework should be prompt.
9. The frequency and duration of homework assignments and major tests should take into consideration time requirements for extracurricular activities and community involvement of students.

Parents:

1. Parents are asked to create a home environment that facilitates the student's study.
2. Parents should be willing to work with instructors to create a positive climate for academic advancement.
3. Parents should be willing to come to a conference with instructors about student progress.
4. If parents see a student's problem before a teacher does, they should notify the teacher.
5. If emergency circumstances prevent a child's finishing his homework, the parent should notify the teacher of the specific circumstance. This should rarely happen.

Students:

1. All students in a class will be responsible for their own assignments. Failure to turn in assignments will necessitate remedial activities.
2. Students will exercise self-discipline and time management skills.

Administrators:

1. Administrators will communicate the district and school homework policies to parents.
2. Administrators will monitor the implementation of the policy.
3. Administrators will coordinate the scheduling of classes and homework among different subjects if needed.

## **IMMUNIZATION**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reason or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official

forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubeola (measles), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis (polio), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and varicella(chicken pox). The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Department of State Health Services. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. [For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the Department of State Health Services Web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.]

## ***LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES***

### **Questioning of Students**

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

### **Students Taken Into Custody**

State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a

condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.

- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

### **Notification of Law Violations**

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who is required to register as a sex offender or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

[For further information, see policies FL(LEGAL) and GRA(LEGAL).]

### **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

A student with limited English proficiency (LEP) is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for LEP student.

In order to determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will then designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs the student will require to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student's continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR-L, as mentioned at Standardized Testing, below, may be administered to a LEP student. The Texas English Language Proficiency

Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to LEP students who qualify for services.

If a student considered LEP and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student's ARD committee will make these decisions.

## ***MAKEUP WORK***

### **Makeup Work Assignments Because of Absence**

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

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time frame of 1 day per absence. [For further information, see policy EIAB(LOCAL).]

**A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.**

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Secondary teachers may assign a late penalty to any project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

### **DAEP Makeup Work**

A student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, a foundation curriculum course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the course through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, another distance learning options, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA(LEGAL).]

### **In-school Suspension (ISS) Makeup Work**

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FO(LEGAL).]

Students and their parents are encouraged to discuss options with the teacher or counselor to ensure the student completes all work required for the course or grade level.

## ***MEDICINE AT SCHOOL***

District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

- Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:
  - Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
  - Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
  - Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
  - Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
- In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:
  - In accordance with the guidelines developed with the district's medical advisor; and
  - When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and to the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal.

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL).]

## **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.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policies at FFAC.]

## ***NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT***

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Veribest ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, 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.

The following district staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of gender: Secondary/Elementary Principal, 10062 FM HWY 380, Veribest, TX 76886, 325-655-2851.
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Counselor, 10062 FM HWY 380, Veribest, TX 76886, 325-655-2851.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the Superintendent 10062 FM HWY 380, 325-655-4912.[SEE FB(LOCAL) and FFH(LOCAL).]

## ***NONTRADITIONAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS***

[See **Requirements for a Diploma** on page 31.]

## ***PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS***

Veribest ISD addresses state-mandated screening procedures by conducting screens of vision, hearing and spinal (scoliosis). For more information contact the school nurse.

Physical examinations are required for all incoming 7th grade, 9th grade, and 11th grade athletes. Sixth graders are required to have a physical if they are needed to fill an athletic team.

## ***PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE***

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 5.]

A minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. [See policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

## ***PRAYER***

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level, the recommendation of the student's teacher, the score received on any criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessment, and any other necessary academic information as determined by the district. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

In addition, at certain grade levels a student—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and the date of the first administration of the STAAR.

- In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 assessment in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 assessment in English.

Because the 2011-2012 school year is the first year of implementation of the STAAR, students will not be required by state law to perform satisfactorily on the grade 5 or 8 STAARs for this one year only in order to be promoted to the next grade level.

Parents of a student in grade 3 - 8 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year.

With the exception of the 2011-2012 school year, a student in grade 5 or 8 will have two additional opportunities to take a failed assessment. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the student's parent, will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third failed attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. In order for the student to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the district, the decision of the committee must be unanimous and the student must complete additional special instruction before beginning the next grade level. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policies at EIE.]

Certain students—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, counselor, or special education director.

A Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) will be prepared for any student in a middle school or beyond who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment or is determined by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year following enrollment in grade 9. The PGP will be designed and implemented by a guidance counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the student's educational goals, address the parent's educational expectations for the student, and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. [For additional

information, see the [counselor and policy EIF(LEGAL).] For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

## ***RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL***

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time.

A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning and follow the campus sign-out procedures before leaving the campus. Otherwise, a student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day.

Unless the principal or superintendent has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, the student should receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent.

## ***REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES***

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every 6 weeks. Students will receive a minimum of 2 grades per week totaling 12 grades for each 6 week grading period.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report in all courses. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. [See **Working Together** on page 2 for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal and are designed to reflect each student's academic achievement for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See policy EIA(LOCAL) and **Grading Guidelines** on page 31.]

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG(LOCAL).

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and should be returned to the school within 5 days.

## ***RETALIATION***

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 22.]

## **SAFETY**

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

### **Accident Insurance**

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

Except for the purchase of insurance against bodily injury sustained by students while training for or engaging in interscholastic athletic competitions or while engaging in school-sponsored activities on a school campus, the District, under state law, cannot pay for medical expenses associated with a student's injury.

### **Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies**

>From time to time, students, teachers, and other district employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

#### **Fire Drill Bells**

- 3 bells      leave the building
- 1 bell        halt; stand at attention
- 2 bells        return to the classroom

#### **Tornado Drill Bells**

- 1 continuous bell              move quietly but quickly to the designated locations
- 2 bells                              return to the classroom

### **Emergency Medical Treatment and Information**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school may have to rely on written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc.

Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

### **Emergency School-Closing Information**

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event school is dismissed early because of severe weather or another emergency. School closings will be announced over local radio and television stations: KACB, KIDY, KLST, KIXY, KSAN, and KGKL.

### **SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS**

See **Standardized Testing** on page 51.

### **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

#### **Use By Students Before and After School**

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

The following areas are open to students before school, beginning at 7:30 a.m.

- Cafeteria will be open to serve breakfast.
- Elementary school gymnasium will be open and students may be seated with their designated class for elementary students.
- High school gymnasium will be open for middle school and high school students.

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

After dismissal of school in the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, students must leave campus immediately.

#### **Conduct Before and After School**

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the *Student Code of Conduct* or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

#### **Use of Hallways During Class Time**

Loitering or standing in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a student must

have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

**Cafeteria Services**

The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. Information about a student’s participation is confidential. See the cafeteria manager to apply.

\*\*\*Prices are subject to change\*\*\*

Breakfast PK-12	Regular	\$1.10	Reduced	\$.30
Guests \$2.00 per meal				
Lunch PK-6	Regular	\$1.75	Reduced	\$.40
Lunch 7-12	Regular	\$2.25	Reduced	\$.40
Guests \$4.00 per meal				

School lunches/breakfasts may be purchased weekly or monthly. Meals are to be paid in advance. Up to \$10.00 in charges will be allowed. Your child will be fed a peanut butter sandwich until his or her charges are paid in full.

The district follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO(LEGAL).]

**Outside Food in Cafeteria**

No outside food can be brought to school during lunch period, except by a parent/guardian for their child ONLY. Food brought by a parent/guardian cannot be shared with any other child.

**Classroom parties and birthdays**

VISD allows parents/guardians to provide snacks for special events. Snacks may be brought and shared after 2:00 p.m. in a special designated area with approval from the principal.

**Library**

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for student use during the regular school day.

**Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups**

Student-organized, student-led noncurriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB(LOCAL).

A list of these groups is available in the principal’s office.

## **SEARCHES**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

### **Students' Desks and Lockers**

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations are not available to others.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

### **Electronic Devices**

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district. [See policy CQ for more information.]

Any searches of personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated in order to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

[See policy FNF(LEGAL) for more information.]

### **Vehicles on Campus**

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the permission of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. **Students are not allowed to enter their vehicle during the school day without the principal's permission.** Students will also be required to show a valid driver's license, insurance, and register their vehicle with the office to be able to park on the school campus. [See also the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

### **Trained Dogs**

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials. Students are responsible for anything found in their lockers or cars. If the dogs

alert to a car, the student shall be asked, if necessary, to unlock the doors and trunk for internal inspection. If the student refuses, the parents will be notified.

### **Metal Detectors**

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL).]

### **Drug-Testing**

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL). Also, see **Steroids**, on page 53.]

## ***SPECIAL PROGRAMS***

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, dyslexic students, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact Michael Steck, Superintendent at 325-655-4912.

## ***STANDARIZED TESTING***

### **SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)**

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the junior year.

The ACT or SAT may be available at no cost to students. In addition, students in grade 8 and 10 may have the opportunity to take the corresponding preparation assessments at no charge. Please check with the counselor for details.

### ***STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)***

#### **Grades 3-8**

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3-8
- Reading, annually in grades 3-8
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- Science in grade 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level. For the 2011-2012 school year only, this requirement will be waived. See **Promotion and Retention** on page 45 for

additional information.

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate, for students receiving special education services, will be available for eligible students, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR-L is a linguistically accommodated assessment that is available for certain limited English proficient (LEP) students, as determined by the student's Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC).

## **End –of-Course (EOC) Assessments for Students in Grades 9-12**

Beginning with ninth graders in the 2011-2012 school year, end-of-course (EOC) assessments will be administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II
- English I, English II, and English III
- Biology, Chemistry, and Physics
- World Geography, World History, and United States History

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation and will also affect the plan under which the student may graduate.

Normally, there will be three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment, which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. For the 2011-2012 school year, however, there will be only the spring and summer administrations of the EOC assessments.

In each content area (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies), a student must achieve a cumulative score. To determine whether the student meets the cumulative score, the student's EOC assessment scores in each content area will be added together. If the student's total score on the assessments within the content area is not equal to or greater than the cumulative score set by TEA, the student may retake any of the assessments in that content area until the student achieves the cumulative score. A student who does not achieve the minimum required score on any individual assessment will be required to retake that assessment. A student may choose to retake an EOC assessment in situations other than those listed above as well.

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate, for students receiving special education services, will be available for eligible students, as determined by the student's ARD committee. These particular EOC assessments may have different testing windows than the general assessments, and the ARD committee will determine whether successful performance on the assessments will be required for graduation.

STAAR-L, which is a linguistically accommodated assessment, will be available for students who have been determined to be limited English proficient (LEP) and who require this type of testing accommodation.

Additional information will be provided to students and parents prior to the spring 2012 administrations.

Also see **Course Credit** on page 21, **Grading Guidelines** on page 31, and **Graduation** on page 31 for additional information.

## **TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills)**

TAKS is a state-mandated assessment currently being transitioned to the STAAR program. However, depending on the grade level of the student, TAKS may still be administered to a student.

For a student in grade 10 and 11 during the 2011-2012 school year, the student will be assessed with TAKS in the subject areas of mathematics, English/language arts, social studies, and science. The test at grade 11 is called “exit-level” TAKS, and satisfactory performance on this test is required for graduation.

Also see **Graduation** on page 31 for more information.

## **THEA (Texas Higher Education Assessment)**

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most must take a standardized test, such as the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA). The purpose of the THEA is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering, freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This test may be required before a student enrolls in a dual-credit course offered through the district as well.

## **STEROIDS**

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use.

Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

Students participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing. More information on the UIL testing program may be found on the UIL Web site at <http://www.uil texas.org/health/steroid-information>.

## **STUDENT SPEAKERS**

A student who is eligible and wishes to introduce an approved school event should submit his or her name to the administration.

As determined by the principal, students who have been selected for special honors, such as captain of an athletic team, student council officers, leaders of school-sponsored organizations, homecoming king or queen, or prom king or queen may also address school audiences at designated events.

[See policy FNA(LOCAL).]

## **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Students who have failed a class or classes during the school year may take summer school at an approved public school. Veribest ISD will work with the approved, accredited school to grant credit for those failed classes providing the student is successful in all summer classes. Veribest

ISD will not be responsible for transportation to and from summer school and will not provide reimbursement for tuition or transportation to a summer school. Please see the counselor or principal for more details.

## **TAKS (TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)**

See **Standardized Testing** on page 51.

## **TARDINESS**

Students at VISD are expected to show up for class on time. Students who do not have written permission to be late for class will receive a tardy.

VISD Tardy Policy:

1<sup>st</sup> tardy – a teacher warning.

2<sup>nd</sup> tardy - a teacher warning and student notified parent will be contacted on third tardy

3<sup>rd</sup> tardy – teacher will contact parent by e-mail or phone

All subsequent tardies will result in further disciplinary action by the principal.

## **TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, AND TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT**

State-approved textbooks are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return a book issued by the school loses the right to free textbooks until the book is returned or paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided textbooks for use at school during the school day.

## **TRANSFERS**

Veribest ISD reserves the right to accept or reject any transfer student. Revocation during the school year may also occur if a student fails to meet Veribest ISD attendance standards or is habitually tardy or truant. A transfer student can also be revoked due to a lack of academic effort, academic attitude, or academic performance (grades). A transfer student can also be revoked if class size becomes an issue. Transfers are reviewed at the end of each spring. Transfers are only accepted during the fall semester of the current school year.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **School-Sponsored Trips**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated

by the parent.

## **Buses and Other School Vehicles**

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. Further information may be obtained by calling Michael Steck at 325-655-4912.

See the *Student Code of Conduct* for provisions regarding transportation to the disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP).

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.

When students ride in a District van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*; bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

## **VANDALISM**

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come—littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

## **VIDEO CAMERAS**

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video/audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

### **General Visitors**

Parents and others are welcome to visit District schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the principal's office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

## **WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL**

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the principal's office.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

A student who is 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor, may withdraw without parental signature.

## GLOSSARY

**Accelerated instruction** is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level.

**ACT** refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the American College Test. The test may be a requirement for admission to certain colleges or universities.

**ARD** is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student and his or her parents are members of the committee.

**Attendance Review Committee** is sometimes responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit lost because of absences.

**DAEP** stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the *Student Code of Conduct*.

**EOC** assessments are end-of-course tests, which are state-mandated, and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments will be required for graduation beginning with students in grade 9 during the 2011-2012 school year. These exams will be given in English I, English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, World Geography, World History, and United States History.

**FERPA** refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

**IEP** is the written record of the Individualized Education Program prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or district wide tests; whether successful completion of state-mandated assessments is required for graduation, etc.

**ISS** refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the *Student Code of Conduct*. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

**LAT** stands for Linguistically Accommodated Testing, which is an assessment process for recent immigrant English language learners who are required to be assessed in certain grades and subjects under the NCLB Act.

**NCLB Act** is the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

**PGP** stands for Personal Graduation Plan, which is recommended for all students entering grade 9 and is required by state law for any student in middle school or higher who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

**SAT** refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

**SHAC** stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to assist the district in ensuring that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction.

**Section 504** is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

**STAAR** is the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments, effective beginning with certain students for the 2011-2012 school year.

**STAAR ALTERNATE** is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

**STAAR MODIFIED** is an alternative state-mandated assessment based on modified achievement standards that is administered to eligible students receiving special education services, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

**STAAR LINGUISTICALLY ACCOMMODATED (STAAR L)** is an alternative state-mandated assessment with linguistic accommodations designed for certain recent immigration English language learners.

**State-mandated assessments** are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the grade 11 exit-level test or end-of-course assessments, when applicable, is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

**Student Code of Conduct** is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board; identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom or campus. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion, and states whether self-defense is a consideration in suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion. The *Student Code of Conduct* also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

**TAKS** is the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the state's standardized achievement test currently given to students in certain subjects in grades 10 and 11 and is required for graduation for students at these grade levels..

**TELPAS** stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language, and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

**TxVSN** is the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors, and courses are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.