

Ponder Independent School District

Agenda ~ Regular Meeting

Monday, August 25, 2025 ~ We will begin in Executive Session at 5:30 p.m. Open Session will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Administration Building Meeting Room
400 West Bailey Street
Ponder, TX 76259

The subjects to be discussed or considered, or upon which any formal action may be taken, are as listed below. Items do not have to be taken in the order shown on this meeting notice. Unless removed from the consent agenda, items identified within the consent agenda will be acted on at one time.

If during the course of the meeting, discussion of any item on the agenda should be held in a closed meeting, the board would conduct a closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Tex. Gov't Code, Chapter 551, Subchapters D and E, or Government Code 418.183(f). Before any closed meeting is convened, the presiding officer will publicly identify the section or sections of the Act authorizing the closed meeting. All final votes, actions, or decisions will be taken in open meeting. [See BEC(LEGAL)].

- I. **Call Meeting to Order / Roll Call**
- II. **Executive Session**
- III. **Opening Ceremony**
- IV. Student Recognitions
- V. **Public Forum / Comments to the Board**
 - A. Concerning Items Not on the Agenda
 - B. Concerning Specific Agenda Items
- VI. **Public Hearing**
 - A. Discuss 2025-26 Maintenance and Operations (M&O) and Interest and Sinking (I&S) District Tax Rates
- VII. **Consent Agenda**
 - A. Consider minutes of previous meetings
 - B. Consider 2025-26 Student and Employee Handbooks
 - C. Consider T-TESS Calendar for 2025-2026
 - D. Consider designating Patricia Dawson, Chris Jones, Tony Ramsey, Kimberly McCage, Seth Hay, Heather Thornburg, and Ashley Bisdorf, as T-TESS Appraisers and Heather Thornburg, Chris Jones, Patricia Dawson, and Tara Allred as T-PESS Appraiser for the 2025-2026 school year.
 - E. Consider Innovative Courses for PISD
 - F. Consider NWEA MAP Screener
 - G. Monthly Reports - District Finances
 1. Budget Summary & Check Register
 2. Fund Financial Status
 3. Re-cap from Denton CAD
 4. Utilities report
 - H. Consider acceptance of donations
 - I. Consider Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Denton County JJAEP for 2025-26
- VIII. **Reports**
 - A. First Student Report
 - B. VLK Visioning Presentation

- C. Campus Principals
 - 1. Attendance & Enrollment / Academics & Extracurriculars / Current & Upcoming Events
- D. Athletic Director
- E. District Operations Update
- F. Chief Financial Officer
- G. Chief of Elementary Schools
- H. Chief of Secondary Schools
- IX. **New Business**
 - A. Consider District Budget Amendments
 - B. Consider approval of items discussed during closed session, including Emergency Operations Plan updates for the 2025-2026 school year.
 - C. Consider authorization for the superintendent to negotiate and execute land transactions as discussed in closed session.
 - D. Consider authorization for disposal of surplus property.
 - E. Consider Ordinance to adopt the M&O and I&S District Tax Rates for Ponder ISD for 2025-26
 - F. Consider Ponder ISD Student Code of Conduct for 2025-26
 - G. Consider a revision to Ponder ISD Board Policy CH(LOCAL)
 - H. Consider an amendment to the Ponder ISD District of Innovation Plan
 - I. Consider Resolution to approve a Good Cause Exception to HB3
(TGC §551.089, Security Devices/Audits)
 - J. Superintendent's Report
 - 1. Bond / Construction Updates
 - 2. Superintendent & Board Training
 - K. Personnel
 - 1. Information item:
 - 2. Resignations / New Employment
- X. **Adjourn Meeting**

The notice for this meeting was posted in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act at the Ponder ISD Administration Office and on the web at www.ponderisd.net on .

Dr. James Hill, Superintendent

**Limit on
Participation**

Audience participation at a Board meeting is limited to the portion of the meeting designated to receive public comment in accordance with this policy. At all other times during a Board meeting, the audience shall not enter into discussion or debate on matters being considered by the Board, unless requested by the presiding officer.

Public Comment

Regular Meetings

At regular Board meetings, the Board shall permit public comment, regardless of whether the topic is an item on the agenda posted with notice of the meeting.

Special Meetings

At all other Board meetings, public comment shall be limited to items on the agenda posted with notice of the meeting.

Procedures

Individuals who wish to participate during the portion of the meeting designated for public comment shall sign up with the presiding officer or designee before the meeting begins as specified in the Board's procedures on public comment and shall indicate the agenda item or topic on which they wish to address the Board.

Public comment shall occur at the beginning of the meeting.

Except as permitted by this policy and the Board's procedures on public comment, an individual's comments to the Board shall not exceed five minutes per meeting.

Meeting
Management

When necessary for effective meeting management or to accommodate large numbers of individuals wishing to address the Board, the presiding officer may make adjustments to public comment procedures, including adjusting when public comment will occur during the meeting, reordering agenda items, deferring public comment on nonagenda items, continuing agenda items to a later meeting, providing expanded opportunity for public comment, or establishing an overall time limit for public comment and adjusting the time allotted to each speaker. However, no individual shall be given less than one minute to make comments.

Board's Response

Specific factual information or recitation of existing policy may be furnished in response to inquiries, but the Board shall not deliberate or decide regarding any subject that is not included on the agenda posted with notice of the meeting.

**Complaints and
Concerns**

The presiding officer or designee shall determine whether an individual addressing the Board has attempted to solve a matter administratively through resolution channels established by policy. If not, the individual shall be referred to the appropriate policy to seek resolution:

- Employee complaints: DGBA
- Student or parent complaints: FNG

- Public complaints: GF

Disruption

The Board shall not tolerate disruption of the meeting by members of the audience. If, after at least one warning from the presiding officer, any individual continues to disrupt the meeting by his or her words or actions, the presiding officer may request assistance from law enforcement officials to have the individual removed from the meeting.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The _____ will hold a public meeting at _____ in _____

_____. **The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.**

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Maintenance Tax \$ _____ / \$100 (Proposed rate for maintenance and operations)

School Debt Service Tax
Approved by Local Voters \$ _____ / \$100 (proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)

Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or difference) in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories:

Maintenance and operations	_____ % increase	or	_____ % (decrease)
Debt service	_____ % increase	or	_____ % (decrease)
Total expenditures	_____ % increase	or	_____ % (decrease)

Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under Tax Code Section 26.04)

	Preceding Tax Year	Current Tax Year
Total appraised value* of all property	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total appraised value* of new property**	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total taxable value*** of all property	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total taxable value*** of new property**	\$ _____	\$ _____

* "Appraised value" is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Tax Code Section 1.04(8).
 ** "New property" is defined by Tax Code Section 26.012(17).
 *** "Taxable value" is defined by Tax Code Section 1.04(10).

Bonded Indebtedness

Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness* \$ _____

* Outstanding principal.

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates

	<u>Maintenance & Operations</u>	<u>Interest & Sinking Fund*</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Local Revenue Per Student</u>	<u>State Revenue Per Student</u>
Last Year's Rate	\$	\$ *	\$	\$	\$
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	\$	\$ *	\$	\$	\$
Proposed Rate	\$	\$ *	\$	\$	\$

*The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

	<u>Last Year</u>	<u>This Year</u>
Average Market Value of Residences	\$	\$
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$	\$
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$	\$
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$	\$
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		\$

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence homestead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Voter-Approval Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is _____ . This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the voter-approval rate of _____ .

Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:

Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	\$
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	\$

A school district may not increase the district's maintenance and operations tax rate to create a surplus in maintenance and operations tax revenue for the purpose of paying the district's debt service.

Visit Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

**Ponder Independent School District Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting MINUTES ~ Monday, July 28, 2025**

Board President, Bruce Laney, called the meeting to order at 5:28 p.m.

Board Members present: Chance Allen: Present, Ben Angeley: Present, Craig Brown: Present, Vangee Deussen: Present, Sara Hunton: Absent, Bruce Laney: Present, Alicia Lujan: Present.

School Staff present: Tara Allred, Patricia Dawson, Erik Lokken, and James Hill

Visitors present: *Rhonda Crass (Leasor Crass), Trey Laird (VLK), Marc Culpepper, Nick McGregor (Town of Ponder)*

- I. **Board Workshop/Executive Session - Adjourned and remanded to open at 6:34 p.m.**
- II. **Call Meeting to Order / Roll Call**
- III. **Opening Ceremony**
- IV. **Public Forum / Comments to the Board**
 - A. Concerning Items Not on the Agenda - **2 speakers: David Sweden & Melissa Brown**
 - B. Concerning Specific Agenda Items
- V. **Consent Agenda**

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. This motion, made by Craig Brown and seconded by Ben Angeley, Carried.

Chance Allen: **Yea**, Ben Angeley: **Yea**, Craig Brown: **Yea**, Vangee Deussen: **Yea**, Sara Hunton: Absent, Bruce Laney: **Yea**, Alicia Lujan: **Yea**

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

 - A. Consider Proactive Legal Services and Retainer Program Agreement for 2025-26 with Leasor Crass, P.C.
 - B. Consider minutes of previous meetings
 - C. Monthly Reports - District Finances
 1. Budget Summary & Check Register
 2. Fund Financial Status
 3. Re-cap from Denton CAD
 4. Utilities report
 - D. Consider acceptance of donations
- VI. **Administrator Reports**
 - A. Town of Ponder Report - **Marc Culpepper, Nick McGregor**
 - B. District Operations Update
- VII. **New Business**
 - A. Consider approval of items discussed in Executive Session, in particular approval of additional personnel to be included in the guardian program.

Motion to approve additional personnel to be included in the guardian program as presented in executive session. This motion, made by Craig Brown and seconded by Ben Angeley, Carried.

Chance Allen: **Yea**, Ben Angeley: **Yea**, Craig Brown: **Yea**, Vangee Deussen: **Yea**, Sara Hunton: Absent, Bruce Laney: **Yea**, Alicia Lujan: **Yea**

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 1
 - B. Consider District Budget Amendments

Motion to approve the District Budget Amendments, as presented. This motion, made by Ben Angeley and seconded by Alicia Lujan, Carried.

Chance Allen: **Yea**, Ben Angeley: **Yea**, Craig Brown: **Yea**, Vangee Deussen: **Yea**, Sara Hunton: Absent, Bruce Laney: **Yea**, Alicia Lujan: **Yea**

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 1
 - C. Consider a proposal to grant the superintendent authority to enter into a signed agreement with VLK architects to provide pre-bond, post bond, and design services for future construction and/or renovations in Ponder ISD.

Motion to authorize James Hill with the ability to approve a contract agreement with VLK for architectural services. This motion, made by Ben Angeley and seconded by Alicia Lujan, Carried.

Chance Allen: Yea, Ben Angeley: Yea, Craig Brown: Yea, Vangee Deussen: Yea, Sara Hunton: Absent, Bruce Laney: Yea, Alicia Lujan: Yea

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

D. Consider Real Property matters:

1. Consider granting access and sewer easements to Jay W. Harris & Nancy J. Harris Revocable Trust - This motion tabled for further investigation

DI. Consider SB 11 Resolution - Regarding Period of Prayer and Reading of Bible or other Religious Text

Motion to approve the Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Ponder Independent School District Regarding Period of Prayer and Reading of Bible or Other Religious Texts Under SB 11 as presented. This motion, made by Ben Angeley and seconded by Craig Brown, Carried.

Chance Allen: Yea, Ben Angeley: Yea, Craig Brown: Yea, Vangee Deussen: Yea, Sara Hunton: Absent, Bruce Laney: Yea, Alicia Lujan: Yea

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

DII. Consider Updates to PISD Board Policies EFB(LOCAL) and FNCE(LOCAL) in accordance with new legislation.

Motion to approve the updates to Ponder ISD Board Policies EFB(LOCAL) and FNCE(LOCAL), as presented. This motion, made by Vangee Deussen and seconded by Craig Brown, Carried.

Chance Allen: Yea, Ben Angeley: Yea, Craig Brown: Yea, Vangee Deussen: Yea, Sara Hunton: Absent, Bruce Laney: Yea, Alicia Lujan: Yea

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

DIII. Superintendent's Report

1. Bond / Construction Updates
2. Superintendent & Board Training

DIV. Personnel

1. Resignations / New Employment

VIII. **Adjourn Meeting**

Board President, Bruce Laney, declared the meeting adjourned by acclamation at 8:06 p.m.

Bruce Laney, Board President

Date

Vangee Deussen, Board Secretary

Date

Ponder ISD Student Handbook



2025-2026

Ponder ISD Student Handbook 2025-26 School Year

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of a disability, please contact the district at info@ponderisd.net or 940-479-8200.

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PREFACE

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! Education is a team effort, and we believe that when students, parents, teachers, and staff work together, we can create a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The Ponder Independent School District Student Handbook is designed to be a resource for the essential information you and your child will need throughout the school year. To make it easier to navigate, 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, and, where possible, further divided by applicability to ages and/or grade levels, for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term “parent,” unless otherwise noted, is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, any person granted some other type of lawful control of the student, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Ponder ISD 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.ponderisd.net and is available in hard copy upon request.

The Student Handbook is a general reference guide only and is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct. Please be aware that it is not a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules that may be applicable in a given circumstance.

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

Please be aware that the Student Handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. The district encourages parents to stay informed of proposed board policy changes by attending board meetings. Changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters or other communications. The district reserves the right to modify provisions of the Student Handbook at any time, whenever it is deemed necessary. Notice of any revision or modification will be given as is reasonably practicable under the circumstances.

Although the Student Handbook may refer to rights established through law or district policy, the Student Handbook does not create any additional rights for students and parents. It does not, nor is it intended to, create contractual or legal rights between any student or parent and the district.

If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact your child's campus office.

Note: References to board policy codes are included for ease of reference. The hard copy of the district's official policy manual is available for review in the district administration office, <https://pol.tasb.org/home/index/387>.

Accessibility

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact the district office at (940) 479-8200.

The policy manual includes:

- Legally referenced (LEGAL) policies that contain provisions from federal and state laws and regulations, case law, and other legal authorities that provide the legal framework for school districts.
- Board-adopted (LOCAL) policies that articulate the board's choices and values regarding district practices.

The following was completed during your student's registration process:

- Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook
- Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information,
- Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (if you choose to restrict the release of information to these entities), and
- Consent/Opt-Out Form for participation in third-party surveys.

[See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on and **Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey** on for more information.]

Section One: Parental Rights

This section describes certain parental rights as specified in state or federal law.

Consent, Opt-Out, and Refusal Rights

Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation

Unless required under state or federal law, a district employee will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without obtaining prior written parental consent.

Note: An evaluation may be legally required under special education rules or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction

Annual Notification

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) makes recommendations for curriculum materials, and the school board adopts the materials and determines the specific content of the instruction.

For further information, see the district's human sexuality instruction [website](#).

In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials.
- Remove his or her child from any part of the human sexuality instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC or attending SHAC meetings. (See the campus principal for details.)
- Use the district's grievance procedure concerning a complaint. See **Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)** and FNG(LOCAL).

State law also requires that instruction related to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS):

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age.
- Devote more attention to abstinence from sexual activity than to any other behavior.
- Emphasize that abstinence, if used consistently and correctly, is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity.
- Direct adolescents to abstain from sexual activity before marriage as the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
- If included in the content of the curriculum, teach contraception and condom use in terms of human use reality rates instead of theoretical laboratory rates.

[See **Consent to Instruction of Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking**.]

Consent Before Human Sexuality Instruction

Before a student receives human sexuality instruction, the district must obtain written consent from the student's parent. Parents will be sent a request for written consent at least 14 days before the instruction will begin.

Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking

Before a student receives instruction on the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence and sex trafficking, the district must obtain written consent from the student's parent. Parents will be sent a request for written consent at least 14 days before the instruction will begin.

Annual Notification

Students receive instruction related to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) makes recommendations for curriculum materials, and the school board adopts the materials and determines the specific content of the instruction.

In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials. As required by law, any curriculum materials in the public domain used in this instruction will be posted on the district's website at the location indicated above.
- Remove his or her child from any part of this instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC or attending SHAC meetings. (See the campus principal for details.)
- Use the district's grievance procedure concerning a complaint. See **Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)** and policy FNG for information on the grievance and appeals process.

[See **Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction**, **Dating Violence on**; and **Child Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children**]

Consent to Provide a Mental Health Care Service

The district will not provide a mental health care service to a student or conduct a medical screening of a student as part of the district's intervention procedures except as permitted by law.

The district has established procedures for recommending to a parent an intervention for a student with early warning signs of mental health concerns, substance abuse, or suicide risk. The district's mental health liaison will notify the student's parent within a reasonable amount of time after the liaison learns that a student has displayed early warning signs and provide information about available counseling options.

The district has also established procedures for staff to notify the mental health liaison regarding a student who may need intervention.

The mental health liaison can be reached at:

Cindy Fraser
Mental Health Coordinator
500 West Bailey Street. Ponder, Tx 76259
cfraser@ponderisd.net
940-479-8210

The mental health liaison can provide further information regarding these procedures as well as curriculum materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support on and off campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus.

[See **Mental Health Support**.]

Consent to Display a Student's Original Works and Personal Information

Teachers may display a student's work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement without seeking prior parental consent. These displays may include personally identifiable student information. Student work includes:

- Artwork
- Special projects
- Photographs
- Original videos or voice recordings
- Other original works

However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying a student's work on the district's website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the district (such as a campus or classroom website), or in district publications, which may include printed materials, videos, or other methods of mass communication.

Consent to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction if a Student is Under Age 14

A student under age 14 must have parental permission to participate in the district's [Parenting and Paternity Awareness Program](https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/child-support/programs-and-initiatives/parenting-and-paternity-awareness-papa/papa-educators/papa-curriculum) (<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/child-support/programs-and-initiatives/parenting-and-paternity-awareness-papa/papa-educators/papa-curriculum>). This program was developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE) to be incorporated into health education classes.

Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission when it:

- Is to be used for school safety,
- Relates to classroom instruction or a co curricular or extracurricular activity,
- Relates to media coverage of the school, or
- Relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.

In other circumstances, the district will seek written parental consent before making a video or voice recording of a student.

Please note that parents and visitors to a classroom, both virtual and in person, may not record video or audio or take photographs or other still images without permission from the teacher or other school official.

Consent for Parent Observation of a Classroom

A parent may request to observe their student's classroom instruction. Contact the building principal. Observation will be limited to no more than 45 minutes. Principal has the authority to determine location and time.

Opting Out of Advanced Mathematics in Grades 6-8

The district will automatically enroll a student in grade 6 in an advanced mathematics course if the student performed in the top 40 percent on the grade 5 mathematics STAAR or a local measure that demonstrates proficiency in the student's grade 5 mathematics course work.

Enrollment in an advanced mathematics course in grade 6 will enable students to enroll in Algebra I in grade 8 and advanced mathematics in grades 9-12.

The student's parent may opt the student out of automatic enrollment in an advanced mathematics course.

Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment

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

However, in accordance with law, the district may not administer corporal punishment if a student's parent submits a signed, written statement prohibiting its use.

A parent who does not want corporal punishment administered to his or her child must submit a written statement to the campus principal stating this decision. This signed statement must be submitted each school year. A parent may revoke this prohibition at any time during the school year by providing a signed statement to the campus principal.

Note:

- District personnel may use discipline methods other than corporal punishment if a parent requests that corporal punishment not be used.
- If the district knows that a student is in temporary or permanent custody of the state (through foster care, kinship care, or other arrangements), corporal punishment will not be administered, even when the student's caregiver or caseworker has not submitted a signed statement prohibiting its use.

Limiting Electronic Communications between Students and District Employees

The district permits teachers and other approved employees to use electronic communications with students within the scope of professional responsibilities, as described by district guidelines.

For example, a teacher may create a social networking page for his or her class to relay information regarding class work, homework, and tests. A parent is welcome to access such a page.

However, text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a district employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity must communicate with a student participating in that activity.

The employee is required to include the student's parent as a recipient on all text messages.

The employee is required to include his or her immediate supervisor and the student's parent as recipients on all text messages.

A parent who does not want his or her child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee should contact the campus principal.

Objecting to the Release of Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" from a student's education records without written consent.

"Directory information" is information that, if released, is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Examples include:

- A student's photograph (for publication in the school yearbook)
- A student's name and grade level (for communicating class and teacher assignments)
- The name, weight, and height of an athlete (for publication in a school athletic program)
- A list of student birthdays (for generating schoolwide or classroom recognition)
- A student's name and photograph (posted on a district-approved and -managed social media platform)
- The names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication (to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period)

Directory information will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, a parent or eligible student may object to the release of this information. Any objection must be made in writing to the principal [within ten school days of the student's first day of instruction for this school year. [See **Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information**, included in the forms packet.]

The district requests that families living in a shelter for survivors of family violence or trafficking notify district personnel that the student currently resides in such a shelter. Families may want to opt out of the release of directory information so that the district does not release any information that might reveal the location of such a shelter.

The district has identified the following as directory information: student name; address; telephone listing; electronic mail address; photograph; date and place of birth; 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 members of athletic teams. If a parent objects to the release of the student's information included on the directory information response form, this objection also applies to the use of that information for school-sponsored purposes, such as:

- Honor roll
- School newspaper
- Yearbook
- Recognition activities
- News releases
- Athletic programs

Note: Also see **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records**.

Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Unless a parent has advised the district not to release his or her student's information, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the district to comply with requests from military recruiters or institutions of higher education to provide the following information about students:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone listing

Military recruiters may also have access to a student's district-provided email address, unless a parent has advised the district not to release this information.

[See **Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**, included in the forms packet.]

Participation in Third-Party Surveys

Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) provides parents certain rights regarding participation in surveys, the collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

A parent has the right to consent before a student is required to submit to a survey funded by the U.S. Department of Education that concerns any of the following protected areas:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family
- Sex behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, and ministers

- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility for a program

A parent may inspect the survey or other instrument and any corresponding instructional materials used in connection with such a survey. [See policy EF(LEGAL) for more information.]

“Opting Out” of Participation in Other Types of Surveys or Screenings and the Disclosure of Personal Information

The PPRA gives parents the right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:

- Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from the child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing that information to others.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student.

Exceptions are hearing, vision, or spinal screenings, or any physical examination or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA for more information.]

A parent may inspect:

- Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party
- Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
- Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum

The ED provides extensive information about the [Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment](https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/protection-pupil-rights-amendment-ppra-general-guidance) (<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/protection-pupil-rights-amendment-ppra-general-guidance>), including a [PPRA Complaint Form](https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint) (<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>).

Removing a Student from Instruction or Excusing a Student from a Required Component of Instruction

See **Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction** and **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking** for information on a parent's right to remove a student from such instruction.

Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence in Grades 3-12

State law designates the week of September 17 as Celebrate Freedom Week and requires all social studies classes to provide the following:

- Instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution
- A specific recitation from the Declaration of Independence for students in grades 3-12.

Per state law, a student may be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence if any of the following apply:

- A parent provides a written statement requesting that his or her child be excused.

- The district determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation.
- A parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the U.S. government extends diplomatic immunity.

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

Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags

A parent may request that his or her child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be made in writing.

State law, however, requires that all students participate in one minute of silence following recitation of the pledges.

[See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** and policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

Religious or Moral Beliefs

A parent may remove his or her child temporarily from the classroom if a scheduled instructional activity conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs.

The removal may not be used to avoid a test and may not extend for an entire semester. The student must also satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

Tutoring or Test Preparation

A teacher may determine that a student needs additional targeted assistance for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills based on:

- Informal observations
- Evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests
- Results from diagnostic assessments

The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible.

In accordance with state law and policy EC, districts must obtain parental permission before removing a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the days the class is offered.

If a district offers tutorial services to students, state law requires a student with a grade below 70 for a reporting period to attend.

[For questions about school-provided tutoring programs, contact the student's teacher and see policies EC and EHBC. See **Standardized Testing** for information regarding required accelerated instruction after a student fails to perform satisfactorily on certain state-mandated tests.]

Right of Access to Student Records, Curriculum Materials, and District Records/Policies

Parent Review of Instructional Materials and Plan

A parent has the 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, whether instruction is delivered in-person, virtually, or remotely.

The district will make instructional materials available for parent review no later than 30 days before the school year begins and for at least 30 days after the school year ends. However, tests that have not yet been administered will not be made available for parent examination.

The district will provide login credentials to each student's parent for any learning management system or online learning portal used in instruction to facilitate parent access and review.

A parent is also entitled to request that the school allow the student to take home instructional materials the student uses. The school may ask the student to return the materials at the beginning of the next school day.

A school must provide printed versions of electronic instructional materials to a student if the student does not have reliable access to technology at home.

Teachers are required to provide a copy of the teacher's instructional plan or course syllabus for each class to the parent of each student enrolled in that class before the beginning of each semester. A parent may obtain additional copies of plan or syllabus by request. *The instructional plan/syllabus will be linked to the teacher's name and contact information on the Ponder ISD school webpage, and notification will be sent to parents.*

[For information about parental access to any online library catalog and library materials, including records of their child's checked out library materials, see Library (All Grade Levels).]

District Review of Instructional Materials

A parent may request that the district conduct an instructional material review in a math, English Language Arts, science, or social studies class in which the parent's student is enrolled to determine alignment with state standards and the level of rigor for the grade level.

The district is not required to conduct an instructional material review for a specific subject area or grade level at a specific campus more than once per school year.

For more information about requesting an instructional material review, contact the campus principal.

Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Noncustodial Parent

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 the Student Code of Conduct and policy FO(LEGAL) for more information.]

Ascender Parent Portal

Ponder ISD is continuing its efforts to facilitate communication with parents/guardians. To this end, you have the ability to securely view your child's grades, attendance information, and state assessment information via the Internet using the Ascender Parent Portal. Each child will have a unique username and password assigned to their records. Please keep your password(s) confidential so only you can access the information. Your username and password should not be shared with your child because there is parent-specific information that could be changed and should not be available to your child. If at any time you feel your password has been compromised or if you do not want access to your child's records through the Ascender Parent Portal, please contact your child's school. To secure your unique username and password you will need to complete the required forms in your child's respective school front office and sign for the confidential information.

Participation in Federally Required, State-Mandated, and District Assessments

In accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a parent may request information regarding any federal, state, or district policy related to his or her child's participation in required assessments.

Student Records

Accessing Student Records

A parent may review his or her child's 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 school counselor evaluations
- Reports of behavioral patterns
- Records relating to assistance provided for learning difficulties, including information collected regarding any intervention strategies used with the child, as the term "intervention strategy" is defined by law
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to the child
- Teaching materials and tests used in the child's classroom

Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and eligible students certain rights regarding student education records.

For purposes of student records, an “eligible” student is anyone age 18 or older or who attends a postsecondary educational institution. These rights, as discussed here and at **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** , are the right to:

- Inspect and review student records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access.
- Request an amendment to a student record the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of FERPA.
- Provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student’s records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- [File a complaint \(https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint\)](https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint) with the U.S. Department of Education concerning failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements.

Both FERPA and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy.

Before disclosing 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.

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

Inspection and release of student records is restricted to an eligible student or a student’s parent unless the school receives a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student’s education records. A parent’s rights regarding access to student records are not affected by the parent’s marital status.

Federal law requires that control of the records goes to the student as soon as the student:

- Reaches the age of 18;
- Is emancipated by a court; or
- Enrolls in a postsecondary educational institution.

However, the parent may continue to have access to the records 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.

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student’s education records without written consent of the parent or eligible student when school officials have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records.

Legitimate educational interest may include:

- 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
- Investigating or evaluating programs

School officials may include:

- Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals
- Teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or medical staff)
- A person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a specific institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer, or volunteer)
- A person appointed to serve on a team to support the district’s safe and supportive school program
- A parent or student serving on a school committee
- A parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties

FERPA also permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information without written consent:

- To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General’s office, the U.S. Attorney General’s office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture’s office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or, in certain cases, other child welfare representatives.
- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- To another school, district/system, or postsecondary educational institution to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which the student already is enrolled.
- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or has received.
- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction.
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- When the district discloses directory information-designated details. [See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** to prohibit this disclosure.]

Release of personally identifiable information 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.

A parent or eligible student who wants to inspect the student's records should submit a written request to the custodian of records identifying the records he or she wants to inspect.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will be available to explain the record and to answer questions.

A parent or eligible student who submits 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 the records.

You may contact the custodian of records for currently enrolled students at:

Heather Thornburg
Elementary Principal
401 W. Bailey Street
Ponder, TX 76259
hthornburg@ponderisd.net

Kimberly McCage
Jr. High Principal
300 W. Bailey Street
Ponder, TX. 76259
cmccage@ponderisd.net

Chris Jones
High School Principal
402 W. Bailey Street
Ponder, TX 76259
cjones@ponderisd.net

You may contact the custodian of records for students who have withdrawn or graduated at 940-479-8200.

A parent or eligible student may inspect the student's records and request a correction or amendment 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 appropriate custodian of records. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information 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 after the hearing the records are not amended, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to place a statement in the student's record.

Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a teacher can be changed only if the board of trustees determines that the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading guidelines.

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences, Complaints and Concerns** , and Finality of Grades at policy FNG(LEGAL).]

The district's student records policy is found at policy FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) and is available at the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's website.

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

Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications

A parent may request information regarding the professional qualifications of his or her child's teachers, including whether the teacher:

- Has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and
- Is currently teaching in the field or discipline of his or her certification.

The parent also has the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to the child.

A Student with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances

Children of Military Families

[The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children](https://www.dodea.edu/partnership/interstatecompact.cfm)

(<https://www.dodea.edu/partnership/interstatecompact.cfm>) entitles children of military families to flexibility regarding certain district and state requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities
- Enrollment in the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN)
- Graduation requirements

The district will excuse absences related to a student visiting a parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who is:

- Called to active duty
- On leave
- Returning from a deployment of at least four months

The district will permit **no more than five** excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

Additional information may be found at [Military Family Resources at the Texas Education Agency](https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/military-family-resources) (<https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/military-family-resources>).

Parental Role in Certain Classroom and School Assignments

Multiple-Birth Siblings

State law permits a parent of multiple-birth siblings (for example, twins, triplets) assigned to the same grade and campus to request in writing that the children be placed in either the same classroom or separate classrooms.

Written requests must be submitted by the 14th day after the students' enrollment. [See policy FDB(LEGAL) for more information.]

Safety Transfers/Assignments

The board or its designee will honor a parent's request to transfer his or her child to another classroom or campus if the district has determined that the child has been a victim of bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832.

The board may transfer a student who has engaged in bullying to another classroom.

[See **Bullying**, and policies FDB and FFI for more information.]

The district will honor a parent's request for the transfer of his or her child to a safe public school in the district if the child attends a school identified by the Texas Education Agency as persistently dangerous or if the child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds.

[See policy FDE for more information.]

The board will honor a parent's request for the transfer of his or her child to a neighboring district if the child has been the victim of 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 the assault. In accordance with policy FDE, if the victim does not wish to transfer, the board will transfer the assailant.

Student Use of a Service/Assistance Animal

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student's disability must submit a written request to the principal before bringing the service/assistance animal on campus. The district will try to accommodate a request as soon as possible but will do so within ten district business days. If approved, the student is responsible for the care and supervision of the service animal, including cleaning up after the animal. If a service animal is deemed to not be housebroken or dangerous, the District may ask that the animal be removed from the premises.

A Student in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district will provide enrollment and registration assistance, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment, to any

student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care).

A student in the conservatorship (custody) of the state who enrolls in the district after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year.

The district will assess the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district.

The district will award partial course credit when the student only passes one half of a two-half course. [For provisions on partial course credit for students who are not in the conservatorship of the state, see EI(LOCAL).]

A student in the conservatorship of the state who is moved outside the district's or school's attendance boundaries — or who is initially placed in the conservatorship of the state and moved outside the district's or school's boundaries — is entitled to remain at the school the student was attending prior to the placement or move until the student reaches the highest grade level at that particular school.

If a student in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets its graduation criteria.

For a student in the conservatorship of the state who is eligible for a tuition and fee exemption under state law and likely to be in care on the day preceding the student's 18th birthday, the district will:

- Assist the student with the completion of applications for admission or financial aid.
- Arrange and accompany the student on campus visits.
- Assist in researching and applying for private or institution-sponsored scholarships.
- Identify whether the student is a candidate for appointment to a military academy.
- Assist the student in registering and preparing for college entrance examinations, including (subject to the availability of funds) arranging for the payment of examination fees by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).
- Coordinate contact between the student and a liaison officer for students formerly in the conservatorship of the state.

If you have questions, please contact the district's foster care liaison:

Cindy Fraser

Counseling Coordinator

cfraser@ponderisd.net

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** and **Course Credit**]

A Student Who Is Homeless

A parent is encouraged to inform the district if his or her child is experiencing homelessness. District staff can share resources that may be able to assist families.

Please also check the campus website for information related to services available in the area that can help families who are homeless.

A student who is homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain district provisions, including:

- Proof of residency requirements
- Immunization requirements
- Educational program placement (if the student is unable to provide previous academic records or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness)
- Credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year (if the student enrolled in the district after the beginning of the school year), per State Board of Education (SBOE) rules
- Assessment of the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district
- Awarding partial credit when a student passes only one half of a two-half course
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities
- Graduation requirements

Federal law allows a student who is homeless to remain enrolled in the "school of origin" or to enroll in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing.

If a student who is homeless in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, state law allows the student to request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied by the district's eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL). The district will expedite local timelines, when possible, for prompt dispute resolution.

For more information on services for students who are homeless, contact the district's homeless education liaison:

Cindy Fraser

Homeless Education Liaison

cfraser@ponderisd.net

940-479-8273

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** and **Course Credit**.]

A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS). The implementation of MTSS has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individuals listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services.

This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine whether the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

Special Education Referrals

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or to a district administrative employee of the school district, the district must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district must give the parent prior written notice of whether it agrees or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the [Notice of Procedural Safeguards](https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal/publications) (https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal/publications). If the district agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Note: A request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally; it does not need to be made in writing. Districts must still comply with all federal prior-written notices and procedural safeguard requirements as well as the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of having a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district to respond within the 15 school-day timeline.

If the district decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If the district receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30 due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the school district in a companion document titled [Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process](https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal/publications) (https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal/publications).

Contact Person for Special Education/504

For questions or concerns listed below, please contact:

Daina Hunt
Coordinator Sped/504
dhunt@ponderid.net
940-479-8274

- Regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education or 504 services.
- For questions regarding post-secondary transitions, including the transition from education to employment, for students receiving special education services.
- **Section 504 Referrals**
 - Each school district must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's Section 504 program. Districts must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes:
 - Notice
 - An opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records
 - An impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel
 - A review procedure

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504.**]

Visit these websites for information regarding students with disabilities and the family:

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal?destination=/) (https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal?destination=/)
- [Partner Resource Network](http://prntexas.org/) (<http://prntexas.org/>)
- [SPEDTEX: Special Education Information Center](https://www.spedtex.org/) (<https://www.spedtex.org/>)
- [Texas First Project](http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/) (<http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/>)
- [TEA Special Education Parent and Family Resources](https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/parent-and-family-resources) (<https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/parent-and-family-resources>)

Notification to Parents of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to Students in General Education

In accordance with state law, the district will annually notify parents if their child receives assistance for learning difficulties. Details of such assistance can include intervention strategies. This notice is not intended for those students already enrolled in a special education program.

A Student Who Receives Special Education Services with Other School-Aged Children in the Home

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, state law permits the parent or guardian to request that other students residing in the household be transferred to the same campus — if the grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus.

The student receiving special education services would be entitled to transportation; however, the district is not required to provide transportation to other children in the household.

The parent or guardian should contact the school principal regarding transportation needs prior to requesting a transfer for other children in the home. [See policy FDB(LOCAL) for more information.]

A Student Who Speaks 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 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.

[See **Emergent Bilingual Students and Special Programs.**]

A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504

A student with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law — and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services — may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be formed to determine whether the student needs services and supports under Section 504 in order to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as defined in federal law.

[See **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services** and policy FB for more information.]

Section Two: Other Important Information for Parents and Students

This section contains important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements.

It is organized alphabetically to serve as a quick-reference guide. Where applicable, the topics are further organized by grade level.

Parents and children should take a moment together to become familiar with the issues addressed in this section. For guidance on a particular topic, please contact the principal.

Absences/Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's education. The student and parent should avoid unnecessary absences.

Attendance at the secondary level is taken each period. Students are marked absent if they are not present during the first 10 minutes of class at the secondary level and mid morning at the elementary level. Perfect Attendance is defined as a student attending school all day, every day for the entire school year. This means that a student has no early sign-outs, or full or partial absences with the exception of medical appointments where a student is in attendance a minimum of 6 periods in the day. They must present a doctor's note upon returning to school. We encourage all of our students to attend school whenever they are well enough to do so.

Two important state laws are discussed below — one dealing with compulsory attendance and the other with how attendance affects the award of a student's final grade or course credit.

Compulsory Attendance

Students enrolled in *pre*kindergarten are required to attend school and are subject to the compulsory attendance requirements as long as they remain enrolled.

Ages 6-18

State law requires that a student who is at least six years of age, or who is younger than six years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not yet reached their 19th birthday, shall 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.

State law requires a student in kindergarten-grade 2 to attend any assigned accelerated reading instruction program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program based on a diagnostic reading instrument.

State law requires a student enrolled in PreKindergarten to follow Compulsory Attendance expectations.

A student will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program before or after school or during the summer if the student does not meet the passing standards on an applicable subject area state assessment.

Age 19 and Older

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. If the student incurs 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 for more information.]

Compulsory Attendance — Exemptions

All Grade Levels

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for the following activities and events, as long as the student makes up all work:

- Religious holy days
- Required court appearances
- Appearing at a governmental office to obtain U.S. citizenship
- Taking part in a US naturalization oath ceremony
- Serving as an election clerk
- Health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences related to autism services
- Absences resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, with certification by a physician
- For students in the conservatorship of the state:
 - An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
 - Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

For children of military families, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian going to, on leave from, or returning from certain deployments. [See **Children of Military Families**.]

Note that documented health-care appointments may include telehealth appointments. Students who are physically on campus will not be allowed to participate in telehealth or other online appointments without specific authorization from an appropriate administrator. Students should not use district-issued technology, including wifi or internet, for telehealth appointments because use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and may be monitored by the district. For more information, see **Telecommunication and Other Electronic Devices**.

Secondary Grade Levels

The district will allow a student who is 15 years of age or older to be absent for one day to obtain a learner license and one day to obtain a driver's license, provided that the board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL). The student will be required to provide documentation of his or her visit to the driver's license office for each absence and must make up any work missed.

[See **Driver License Attendance Verification**.]

The district will allow junior and senior students to be absent for up to two days per year to visit a college or university if the following conditions are met:

- The board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL).
- The principal has approved the student's absence.
- The student follows campus procedures to verify the visit and makes up any work missed.

The district will allow a student 17 years old or older to be absent for up to four days during the period the student is enrolled in high school to pursue enlistment in the U.S. armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the student verifies these activities to the district.

The district will allow a student to be absent for up to two days during the student's junior year and two days during the student's senior year for a career investigation day to visit a professional at that individual's workplace to determine the student's interest in pursuing a career in the professional's field, provided the student verifies these activities to the district.

The district will allow a student to be absent for up to two days per school year to serve as:

- An early voting clerk, provided the district's board has authorized this in policy FEA(LOCAL), the student notifies his or her teachers, and the student receives approval from the principal prior to the absences; or
- An election clerk, if the student makes up any work missed.

The district will allow a student in grades 6-12 to be absent for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran.

Compulsory Attendance — Failure to Comply

All Grade Levels

School employees must investigate and report violations of the compulsory attendance law.

A student who is absent without permission from school, any class, any required special program, or any required tutorial will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

Students with Disabilities

If a student with a disability is experiencing attendance issues, the student's ARD or Section 504 committee will determine whether the attendance issues warrant an evaluation, a reevaluation, and/or modifications to the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan, as appropriate.

Ages 6-18

When a student age 6-18 incurs three or more unexcused absences within a four-week period, the law requires the school to send notice to the parent.

The notice will:

- Remind the parent of his or her duty to monitor the student's attendance and require the student to attend school.
- Request a conference between school administrators and the parent.

- Inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures, including a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service, referrals to counseling or other social services, or other appropriate measures.

For any questions about student absences, parents should contact their student’s campus administrator.

A court of law may impose penalties against the parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. The district may file a complaint against the parent if the student incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student age 12-18 incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

[See policies FEA(LEGAL) and FED(LEGAL) for more information.]

Age 19 and Older

After a student age 19 or older incurs a third unexcused absence, the district is required by law to send the student a letter explaining that the district may revoke the student’s enrollment for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking a student’s enrollment, the district may implement a behavior improvement plan.

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (All Grade Levels)

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend the class at least 90 percent of the days it is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days may receive credit or a final grade if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the class’s instructional requirements. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the judge presiding over the case must also approve the plan before the student receives credit or a final grade.

If a student attends fewer than 75 percent of the class days or does not complete the principal-approved plan, then the attendance review committee will determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade. [See policy FEC for more information.]

With the exception of absences due to serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment, all absences, excused or unexcused, may be held against a student’s attendance requirement. To determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for any absences, the attendance committee will consider:

- Whether the student has mastered the essential knowledge and skills and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- Whether the student has completed makeup work satisfactorily. If the student completes makeup work, absences listed under **Compulsory Attendance — Exemptions** and absences for extracurricular activities will be considered extenuating circumstances.
- Whether the student or the student’s parent had any control over the absences.
- Any information presented by the student or parent to the committee about the absences.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board by following policy FNG(LOCAL).

Official Attendance-Taking Time (All Grade Levels)

The district will take official attendance every day at 10:30 *am*.

A student absent for any portion of the day, should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

Documentation after an Absence (All Grade Levels)

A parent must provide an explanation for any absence upon the student's arrival or return to school. The student must submit a note signed by the parent/guardian, or fill out the Google Form (submitted by the email address that is active in the student's registration documentation) located on the PISD website.

A note signed by the student will not be accepted unless the student is age 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law.

The campus will document in its attendance records whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

Note: The district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence, unless the absence is an exemption under compulsory attendance laws.

Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness (All Grade Levels)

Within three days of returning to school, a student who is absent for more than three 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 absence. Otherwise, the absence may be considered unexcused and in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

Parent notes may be accepted to excuse up to five (5) days of eligible excused student absences per school year.

After the fifth day excused by parent notes, the district will require a statement from a licensed physician or health clinic verifying the illness or condition causing the absences.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor, health clinic, or district nursing staff verifying the illness or condition that caused the absence to determine whether an absence will be excused or unexcused.

Certification of Absence Due to Severe Illness or Treatment

If a student is absent because of a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, a parent must provide certification from a physician licensed to practice in Texas specifying the student's illness and the anticipated period of absence related to the illness or treatment. Physician's certification should be emailed to the campus principal.

Driver License Attendance Verification (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A currently enrolled student seeking a driver's license shall submit the Texas Department of Public Safety Verification of Enrollment and Attendance Form (VOE), signed by the parent, to

the campus central office at least 10 days before it is needed. The district will issue a VOE only if the student meets class credit or attendance requirements. The [VOE form \(https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/driver/forms/VOE.pdf\)](https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/driver/forms/VOE.pdf) is available online.

Further information may be found on the [Texas Department of Public Safety website \(https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/driver-license/how-apply-texas-driver-license-teen\)](https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/driver-license/how-apply-texas-driver-license-teen).

See **Compulsory Attendance — Exemptions for Secondary Grade Levels** for information on excused absences for obtaining a learner license or driver's license.

Accountability under State and Federal Law (All Grade Levels)

Ponder ISD and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of accountability is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, including:

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), based on academic factors and ratings
- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district, compiled by TEA
- The district's financial management report, which includes the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA
- Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by federal law

Accountability information can be found on the district's website at Ponderisd.net. Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

TEA maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at [TEA Performance Reporting Division \(https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/accountability/academic-accountability/performance-reporting\)](https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/accountability/academic-accountability/performance-reporting).

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test (Grades 10-12)

A student in grades 10-12 will be offered an opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test and consult with a military recruiter.

The test shall be offered on October 10, 2025, at 9:00 AM at Ponder High School, and January 23, 2026, at 9:00 AM at Ponder High School.

Contact Shawn Simmons- ssimmons@ponderisd.net for information about this opportunity.

Awards and Honors (All Grade Levels)

Towards the end of the second semester, campuses will host awards ceremonies to recognize and honor student achievements. Detailed information will be provided by each student's respective campus.

Bullying (All Grade Levels)

The district strives to prevent bullying, in accordance with the district's policies, by promoting a positive school culture; building healthy relationships between students and staff; encouraging

reporting of bullying incidents, including anonymous reporting; and investigating and addressing reported bullying incidents.

Bullying is defined in state law as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school

Bullying includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined in state law as bullying that is done using any electronic communication device, including:

- A cellular or other type of telephone
- A computer
- A camera
- Electronic mail
- Instant messaging
- Text messaging
- A social media application
- An internet website
- Any other internet-based communication tool

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include:

- Hazing
- Threats
- Taunting
- Teasing
- Confinement
- Assault
- Demands for money
- Destruction of property
- Theft of valued possessions

- Name-calling
- Rumor-spreading
- Ostracism

The district will integrate into instruction research-based content designed to reduce bullying that is appropriate for students' age groups.

Students in elementary grades will participate in:

- Instruction designed so that students can recognize bullying behaviors and how to report them
- Age-appropriate discussions that encourage peers to intervene when they observe bullying occur
- Instruction that characterizes bullying as a behavior that results from the student's need to acquire more mature social or coping skills, not an unchangeable trait

Students in secondary grades will participate in:

- Instruction on the brain's ability to change and grow so the student recognizes bullying behavior can come from a developmental need to acquire more social skills, can change when the brain matures and learns better ways of coping, and is not an unchangeable trait
- Discussions that portray bullying as undesirable behavior and a means for attaining or maintaining social status at school, and that discourage students from using bullying as a tool for social status
- Instruction designed so that students recognize the role that reporting bullying behaviors plays in promoting a safe school community

The district will use an age-appropriate survey regarding school culture that includes relevant questions on bullying to identify and address student concerns.

The district has a committee that addresses bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives. The committee will include parents and secondary students. For more information on this committee, including interest in serving on the committee, contact *the campus principal*.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or witnesses the bullying of another student, the student or parent should notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible. Any district employee aware of a report of a bullying incident will relay the report to an appropriate administrator. Procedures for reporting allegations of bullying may be found on the district's website.

A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by using [Speak Up](#).

The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying and related misconduct. The district will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying.

If an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may, in certain circumstances, notify law enforcement. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying.

The district will provide research-based interventions, which may include counseling options, for students who engage in bullying behaviors, students who are targeted by bullying behaviors, and any student who witnessed bullying behaviors.

Any action taken in response to bullying will comply with state and federal law regarding students with disabilities.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

Upon recommendation of the administration, the board may transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the board may transfer the student to another campus in the district.

The parent of a student who has been determined to be a victim of bullying may request that the student be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [See **Safety Transfers/Assignments**]

A copy of the district's bullying policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's website, and is included at the end of this handbook as an appendix.

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

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments, Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation, Hazing**, policy FFI, the district's Student Code of Conduct, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Other Work-Based Programs (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

The district offers career and technical education programs in the following areas:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Arts, Audio Visual Technology and Communications
- Business, Marketing, and Finance
- Education and Training

Admission to these programs is based on *grade level* and availability.

District policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

District policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of

1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The district will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission or participation in all educational and vocational programs.

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX coordinator and the ADA/Section 504 coordinator.

Title IX Coordinator: Dr. Patricia Dawson

ADA/Section 504 Coordinator: Daina Hunt

[See **Nondiscrimination Statement** for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator and ADA/Section 504 coordinator.]

Celebrations (All Grade Levels)

Parents and guardians are welcome to provide food for school-designated functions or a student's birthday. To ensure the safety of all students, especially those with food allergies, any shared food must be store-bought, packaged, and include a list of ingredients. Please discuss any potential food allergies with your student's teacher(s).

Occasionally, the school or a class may host functions or celebrations tied to the curriculum that involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers to provide food.

[See **Food Allergies**]

Child Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children (All Grade Levels)

The district has established training for addressing child sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children. Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking.

Warning Signs of Physical abuse

Possible warning signs of physical abuse include:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without apparent injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Extreme fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unseasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse

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. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child.

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

A child who has been or is being sexually abused may exhibit physical, behavioral, or emotional warning signs, including:

- Difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches
- Verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior
- Withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school

Be aware that children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. [See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** and **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking.**]

Warning Signs of Emotional Abuse

Possible warning signs of emotional abuse include:

- Over-compliance or low self-esteem caused by scapegoating or verbal abuse by caregivers
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Lag in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Indicators of a caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems
- Significant changes to behavior, such as withdrawal or over-aggression
- Significant changes to weight, such as substantial weight gain or weight loss

Warning Signs of Neglect

Possible warning signs of neglect include:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Consistent lack of personal hygiene that poses a health risk
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Unaddressed need for dental care or other medical attention

Descriptions and Warning Signs of Trafficking

Child trafficking of any sort is prohibited by the Penal Code. Sex trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, into sexual abuse, assault, indecency, prostitution, or pornography. Labor trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, to engage in forced labor or services.

Traffickers are often trusted members of a child's community, such as friends, romantic partners, family members, mentors, and coaches. Some traffickers contact victims online.

Possible warning signs of sexual trafficking in children include:

- Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude
- Sudden appearance of expensive items (for example, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology)
- Tattoos or branding
- Refillable gift cards
- Frequent runaway episodes
- Multiple phones or social media accounts
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone
- Unexplained injuries
- Isolation from family, friends, and community
- Older romantic partners

Additional warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

- Being unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips
- Being employed but not having a school-authorized work permit
- Being employed and having a work permit but clearly working outside the permitted hours for students
- Owing a large debt and being unable to pay it off
- Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours
- Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss
- Not being in control of his or her own money
- Living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student's caregiver
- A desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so

[See **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking.**]

Reporting and Responding to Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused, trafficked, or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

A child who has experienced sexual abuse or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Children may be more reluctant to disclose sexual abuse than physical abuse and neglect and may only disclose sexual abuse indirectly. As a parent or trusted adult, 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.

If your child is a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information on counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs.

To find out what services may be available in your county, see [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp) (http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp)

Reports of abuse, trafficking, or neglect may be made to the CPS division of the DFPS at 1-800-252-5400 or on the web at [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](http://www.txabusehotline.org) (www.txabusehotline.org).

Further Resources on Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children

The following websites include resources to help increase awareness of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children:

- [Child Welfare Information Gateway](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/whatiscan.pdf) (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/whatiscan.pdf>)
- [KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse](https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/child-abuse.html) (<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/child-abuse.html>)
- [Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team](https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/childsextrafficking) (<https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/childsextrafficking>)
- [Human Trafficking of School-aged Children](https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/human-trafficking-of-school-aged-children) (<https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/human-trafficking-of-school-aged-children>)
- [Child Sexual Abuse: A Parental Guide from the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault](https://taasa.org/product/child-sexual-abuse-parental-guide/) (<https://taasa.org/product/child-sexual-abuse-parental-guide/>)
- [National Center of Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Human Trafficking in America's Schools](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools) (<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools>)

Class Rank/Highest-Ranking Student (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

See [EIC \(Local\)](#) for more details.

Consistent Application for Graduating Class

The District shall apply the same class rank calculation method and rules for local graduation honors for all students in a graduating class, regardless of the school year in which a student first earned high school credit.

Calculation

The District shall include in the calculation of class rank semester grades earned in high school credit courses taken at any grade level, unless excluded below.

The calculation shall include failing grades.

Exclusions

The calculation of class rank shall exclude grades earned in any course substituted for physical education; any local credit course; any course for which a pass/fail grade is assigned; or through credit by examination, with or without prior instruction.

Weighted Grade System**Categories**

The District shall categorize and weight eligible courses as Level 3, Level 2, and Level 1 in accordance with provisions of this policy and as designated in appropriate District publications.

Level 3

Eligible AP courses, dual credit courses, OnRamps courses, and courses locally designated as honors/advanced shall be categorized and weighted as Level 3 courses.

Level 2

Eligible mathematics, English, languages other than English (LOTE), science, and social studies courses that are not designated as Level 3 courses, and Level III and Level IV career and technical education (CTE) courses shall be categorized and weighted as Level 2 courses.

Level 1

All other eligible courses shall be categorized and weighted as Level 1 courses.

Weighted Grade Point Average

The District shall convert semester grades earned in eligible courses to grade points in accordance with the following chart and shall calculate a weighted grade point average (GPA):

Grade	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
100	6.0	5.0	4.0
99	5.9	4.9	3.9
98	5.8	4.8	3.8
97	5.7	4.7	3.7
96	5.6	4.6	3.6
95	5.5	4.5	3.5
94	5.4	4.4	3.4
93	5.3	4.3	3.3
92	5.2	4.2	3.2
91	5.1	4.1	3.1
90	5.0	4.0	3.0

89	4.9	3.9	2.9
88	4.8	3.8	2.8
87	4.7	3.7	2.7
86	4.6	3.6	2.6
85	4.5	3.5	2.5
84	4.4	3.4	2.4
83	4.3	3.3	2.3
82	4.2	3.2	2.2
81	4.1	3.1	2.1
80	4.0	3.0	2.0
79	3.9	2.9	1.9
78	3.8	2.8	1.8
77	3.7	2.7	1.7
76	3.6	2.6	1.6
75	3.5	2.5	1.5
74	3.4	2.4	1.4
73	3.3	2.3	1.3
72	3.2	2.2	1.2
71	3.1	2.1	1.1
70	3.0	2.0	1.0
69	2.9	1.9	0.9
68	2.8	1.8	0.8
67	2.7	1.7	0.7
66	2.6	1.6	0.6
65	2.5	1.5	0.5
64	2.4	1.4	0.4
63	2.3	1.3	0.3
62	2.2	1.2	0.2
61	2.1	1.1	0.1
60	2.0	1.0	0.0

59	1.9	0.9	0.0
58	1.8	0.8	0.0
57	1.7	0.7	0.0
56	1.6	0.6	0.0
55	1.5	0.5	0.0
54	1.4	0.4	0.0
53	1.3	0.3	0.0
52	1.2	0.2	0.0
51	1.1	0.1	0.0
50	1.0	0.0	0.0
49	0.9	0.0	0.0
48	0.8	0.0	0.0
47	0.7	0.0	0.0
46	0.6	0.0	0.0
45	0.5	0.0	0.0
44	0.4	0.0	0.0
43	0.3	0.0	0.0
42	0.2	0.0	0.0
41	0.1	0.0	0.0
Below 40	0.0	0.0	0.0

Transferred Grades

When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible under the Level 1 category and the District has accepted the credit, the District shall include the grades in the calculation of class rank.

When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible to receive additional weight under the District’s weighted grade system, the District shall assign additional weight to the grades based on the categories and grade weight system used by the District only if the same or an equivalent course is offered to the same class of students in the District.

Local Graduation Honors

For the purpose of determining honors to be conferred during graduation activities, the District shall calculate class rank in accordance with this policy and administrative regulations by using grades available at the time of calculation at the end of the third nine-week grading period of the senior year.

For the purpose of applications to institutions of higher education, the District shall also calculate class rank as required by state law. The District's eligibility criteria for local graduation honors shall apply only for local recognitions and shall not restrict class rank for the purpose of automatic admission under state law. [See EIC(LEGAL)]

Valedictorian and Salutatorian

The valedictorian and salutatorian shall be the eligible students with the highest and second-highest rank, respectively. To be eligible for this local graduation honor, a student must:

1. Have been continuously enrolled in the District high school for the two school years immediately preceding graduation;
2. Be graduating after exactly eight semesters of enrollment in high school; and
3. Have completed the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement.

Ties

In case of a tie in weighted GPAs after calculation to the fourth decimal place, the District shall recognize all students involved in the tie as sharing the honor and title.

Highest-Ranking Graduate

The student meeting the local eligibility criteria for recognition as the valedictorian shall also be considered the highest-ranking graduate for purposes of receiving the honor graduate certificate from the state of Texas.

Class Schedules

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a full class schedule. Exceptions may be made occasionally by the campus principal for students in grades 9-12 who meet specific criteria and receive parental consent to enroll in less than a full-day schedule.

Schedule Changes

Students will have a two-day window at the start of each semester to request schedule changes. Beyond this period, no changes will be permitted except under extreme circumstances.

College and University Admissions and Financial Aid (All Grade Levels)

For two school years following graduation, a district student who graduates as valedictorian or in the top ten 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 distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program [see **Foundation Graduation Program**]; or
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

The student is ultimately responsible for meeting the admission requirements of the university or college, including timely submission of a completed application.

If a college or university adopts 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.

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of automatically admitted students to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. From the summer/fall 2026 term through the spring 2027 term, the University will admit the top five percent of a high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through a holistic review process.

As required by law, the district will provide written notice concerning the following:

- Automatic college admission
- Curriculum requirements for financial aid
- Benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid
- [The Texas First Early High School Completion Program](#), which requires a student to provide an official copy of assessment results and transcripts, as applicable, to receive credit for the assessments and credits required for early graduation under the program
- [The Texas First Scholarship Program](#)
- [The Future Texas Teachers Scholarship Program](#)

Parents and students will be asked to sign an acknowledgment that they received this information.

Students and parents should contact the school counselor for further information about automatic admissions, the application process, and deadlines.

[See **Students in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)** for information on assistance in transitioning to higher education for students in foster care.]

See page 31 for information on CTE and other work-based programs.

College Credit Courses (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Students in grades 9-12 may earn college credit through the following opportunities:

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or college preparatory
- Enrollment in AP or dual credit courses through the virtual or hybrid courses offered by the district or another district or school

- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with North Central Texas College (NCTC) and McMurry University, which may be offered on or off campus
- Enrollment in courses taught at other colleges or universities
- Enrollment in these programs is based on application, TSI requirements, and/or approval by campus administration.

Under the Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) program, a student may be eligible to enroll at no cost to the student in dual credit courses at a participating institution of higher education. The FAST program allows students who are or have been educationally disadvantaged at any time during the four years preceding the student's enrollment in a dual credit course to enroll at no cost to the student. The district will determine eligibility upon the student's enrollment in the dual credit course. See the **counselor** for more information.

A student may be eligible for subsidies based on financial need for AP or IB exam fees. [See Fees (All Grade Levels) for more information.]

A student may also earn college credit for certain Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Other Work-Based Programs (Secondary Grade Levels Only) for information on CTE and other work-based programs.

For dual credit purposes, all these methods have eligibility requirements and must be approved before enrollment in the course. Please see the school counselor for more information. Depending on the student's grade level and the course, a state-mandated end-of-course assessment may be required for graduation.

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.

Communications (All Grade Levels)

Parent Contact Information

A parent is legally required to provide in writing the parent's contact information, including address, phone number, and email address.

A parent must provide the contact information to the district upon enrollment and again within two weeks after the beginning of each following school year while the student is enrolled in the district.

If the parent's contact information changes during the school year, the parent must update the contact information in the Ascender Parent Portal no more than two weeks after the date the information changes.

Automated Emergency Communications

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. An emergency situation may include early dismissal, delayed opening, or restricted access to the campus due to severe weather, another emergency, or a security threat. It is crucial to ensure a working number is listed in the student's registration information.

[See **Safety** for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

Automated Non Emergency Communications

Your child's school periodically sends information by automated or pre-recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or email communications that are closely related to the school's mission and specific to your child, your child's school, or the district.

Standard messaging rates of your wireless phone carrier may apply.

Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)

Usually, student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed informally by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal.

For those complaints and concerns that cannot be resolved informally, the board has adopted a Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances policy at FNG(LOCAL). This policy can be viewed in the district's policy manual, available online at [Board Policy FNG\(LOCAL\)](#). The complaint forms can be accessed at the principal's or superintendent's office.

To file a Level I formal complaint a parent or student should complete and submit the complaint form. In general, the written complaint form should be completed and submitted to the campus principal in a timely manner.

If the concern is not resolved, a parent or student may appeal to the superintendent or superintendent's designee.

If the concern is still unresolved, the district provides a process for parents and students to appeal to the board of trustees.

Hearings at each level will be conducted in accordance with the timelines established by law described in the district's policy at FNG(LOCAL).

Conduct (All Grade Levels)

Applicability of School Rules

The board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that defines standards of acceptable behavior — on and off campus, during remote and in-person instruction, and on district vehicles — and outlines 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.

During summer instruction, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the school year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

Campus Behavior Coordinator

Each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct. The contact information for each campus behavior coordinator is listed below:

Ponder Elementary School: Lower Elementary: Tiffani Sandoval; tsandoval@ponderisd.net

Upper Elementary: Ashley Bisdorf; arodriguez@ponderisd.net

Ponder Jr. High: Seth Hay; shay@ponderisd.net

Ponder High School: Tony Ramsey; tramsey@ponderisd.net

Deliveries

Except in emergencies, delivery of messages or packages to students will not be allowed during instructional time. A parent may leave a message or a package, such as a forgotten lunch, for the student to pick up from the front office during a passing period or lunch. Delivery services such as Door Dash, Grub Hub, Uber Eats and other similar services are prohibited.

Disruption of School Operations

Disruption of school operations is not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by state 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 or within 500 feet of district property includes:

- Making loud noises
- Trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity
- 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 is also considered a disruption.

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 and will not be readmitted.

A parent interested in serving as a chaperone for any school social events should contact the campus principal.

Counseling

The district has a comprehensive school counseling program that includes:

- A guidance curriculum to help students develop their full educational potential, including the student's interests and career objectives
- A responsive services component to intervene on behalf of any student whose immediate personal concerns or problems put the student's continued educational, career, personal, or social development at risk
- An individual planning system to guide a student as the student plans, monitors, and manages the student's own educational, career, personal, and social development
- Systems to support the efforts of teachers, staff, parents, and other members of the community in promoting the educational, career, personal, and social development of students

The district will make a preview of the program, including all materials and curriculum, available to parents to review during school hours.

Academic Counseling

Elementary and Middle/Junior High School Grade Levels

The school counselor will provide information to students and parents about college and university admissions and the importance of planning for postsecondary education, including appropriate coursework and financial aid availability and requirements.

In either grade 7 or 8, each student will receive instruction on how best to prepare for high school, college, and a career.

High School Grade Levels

High school 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 year, high school students will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year, how to make the most of academic and career and technical education (CTE) opportunities, and the importance of postsecondary education.

The school counselor will also provide information each year a student is enrolled in high school about:

- The importance of postsecondary education
- The advantages of earning an endorsement and completing the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement
- The disadvantages of pursuing a high school equivalency exam (GED) as opposed to earning a high school diploma
- Financial aid eligibility and how to apply for financial aid
- Automatic admission to state-funded Texas colleges and universities
- Eligibility requirements for the TEXAS Grant
- Availability of district programs that allow students to earn college credit

- Availability of tuition and fee assistance for postsecondary education for students in foster care
- Availability of college credit awarded by institutions of higher education to veterans and military service members for military experience, education, and training

Additionally, the school counselor can provide information about workforce opportunities after graduation or technical and trade school opportunities, including opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates and licenses.

[See Scholarships and Grants for more information.]

Personal Counseling (All Grade Levels)

School counselors are available to assist students with a wide range of personal, social, and family concerns, including emotional or mental health issues and substance abuse. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child’s mental or emotional health, please speak with your child’s school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

If your child has experienced trauma, contact the school counselor for more information.

[See **Mental Health Support**, and **Child Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children** and **Dating Violence** on.]

Course Credit (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A student at any grade level enrolled in a high school course will earn credit for the course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-part (two-semester, 1-credit course), the student’s grades from both halves (semesters) will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. If the student’s combined average is less than 70, the student will be awarded credit only for the half (semester) with the passing grade.

Credit by Examination — If a Student Has Taken the Course/Subject

A student who has previously taken a course or subject but did not receive credit or a final grade for it may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit or a final grade by passing an examination approved by the district’s board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject.

Examples of prior instruction include incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to earn credit by examination after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as “credit recovery.”

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

If a student is granted approval to take an examination for credit, the student must score at least 70 on the examination to receive credit for the course or subject, or meet the criteria to achieve an 'Approaches' or higher on a STAAR-aligned assessment for STAAR End-of-Course (EOC) subjects. If a student is given a STAAR-aligned assessment for a STAAR End-of-Course subject, a pass or fail grade will be given. Students may also be given the NWEA MAP Screener for additional data.

[See the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL) for more information.]

Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration — If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subject

A student will be permitted to earn credit by examination for an academic course or subject area for which the student had no prior instruction for advancement or to accelerate to the next grade level.

The examinations offered by the district are approved by the district's board of trustees. Testing windows for these examinations will be published in district publications and on the district's website. A student may take a specific examination only once per testing window.

The only exceptions to the published testing windows will be for examinations administered by another entity or to accommodate a student experiencing homelessness or a student involved in the foster care system.

When another entity administers an examination, the student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity.

If a student plans to take an examination, the student or parent must register with the school office no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. [See policy EHDC for more information.]

Kindergarten Acceleration

A student who is five by September 1st may take tests in four core areas to accelerate to 1st grade if the student meets all of the following requirements:

- The student scores at least an 80 on each examination in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies
- A district administrator recommends that the student be accelerated
- The student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement

Students in Grades 1-5

A student in elementary school is eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if the student meets all of the following requirements:

- The student scores at least an 80 on each examination in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies
- A district administrator recommends that the student be accelerated
- The student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement

Students in Grades 6-12

A student in grade 6 or above is eligible to earn course credit with:

- A passing score of at least 80 on an examination approved by the board; or
- A scaled score of 50 or higher on an examination administered through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP); or
- A score of 3 or higher on an AP examination, as applicable.

A student may take an examination to earn high school course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's high school course sequence, the student must complete the course.

Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)

Students learn best, and their welfare is best served, in a school environment that is free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

Students are expected to treat peers and district employees with courtesy and respect, avoid offensive behaviors, and stop those behaviors as directed. District employees are likewise expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly address inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office [Board Policy FFH](#). [See policy FFH for more information.]

Dating Violence

Dating violence will not be tolerated at school. To report dating violence, see **Reporting Procedures**, on.

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 or any of the person's past or subsequent partners. This type of conduct is considered harassment if it is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a 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, 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
- Threats to harm a student's past or current dating partner
- Attempts to isolate the student from friends and family
- Stalking
- Encouraging others to engage in these behaviors

In accordance with law, when the district receives a report of dating violence, a district official will immediately notify the parent of the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator.

The counselor's office has information about the dangers of dating violence and resources for seeking help.

For more information on dating violence, see:

- Texas Attorney General's office [recognizing and responding to dating violence flier](https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/child-support/papa/session%2010/recognizing-relationship-violence-en.pdf) (<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/child-support/papa/session%2010/recognizing-relationship-violence-en.pdf>)
- The CDC's [Preventing Teen Dating Violence](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendatingviolence/fastfact.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendatingviolence/fastfact.html>)

[See **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking.**]

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, 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 a 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 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, intimidating, or humiliating conduct
- Offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors
- Physical aggression or assault
- Graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property

Sexual Harassment and Sex-Based Harassment

Sexual harassment and sex-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student are prohibited.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature
- Sexual advances
- Jokes or conversations of a sexual nature

- Other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact that a reasonable person would not construe as sexual in nature, such as comforting a child with a hug or taking the child's hand. However, romantic, sexual, and other inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Pregnancy or Related Conditions

The district does not discriminate on the basis of pregnancy or a related condition.

Please contact *campus principal* for pregnancy-related accommodations.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who makes a report or participates in an investigation of discrimination, harassment, or dating violence is prohibited. 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, school counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. [See policy FFH(LOCAL) and (EXHIBIT) for other appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.]

Upon receiving a report, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute bullying, as defined by law and policy FFI. If the alleged prohibited conduct also meets the statutory and policy definitions for bullying, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted. [See **Bullying**]

The district will promptly notify the parent of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district. In the event alleged prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parent of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy FFH.

Investigation of Report

Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated.

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 comply with law.

If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies the district that it is investigating the matter and requests that the district delay its investigation, the district will resume its investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During an investigation and when appropriate, the district will take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action and, in some cases, corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct was not unlawful.

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the district investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

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.**]

Distance Learning (High School Credit where applicable)

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.

If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN), as described below, 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 may not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) (High School Credit where applicable)

The Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) has been established by the state 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.

Depending on the TXVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the “no pass, no play” rules. [See **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations.**] In addition, a student who enrolls in a TXVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required must still take the corresponding EOC assessment.

A parent may ask questions or request that their child be enrolled in a TXVSN course by contacting the school counselor. Unless an exception is made by the principal a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TXVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course.

Distribution of Literature, Published Materials, or Other Documents (All Grade Levels)

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, newspapers, yearbooks, brochures, flyers, and the like.

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

Non School Materials

From Students

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before selling, posting, circulating, or distributing more than 10 copies of written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any nonschool material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. Approval will be granted or denied within two school days.

The principal has designated message boards as the location for approved non school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA for more information.]

A student may appeal a decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who sells, posts, circulates, or distributes nonschool material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without approval will be removed.

[See policy FNG(LOCAL) for student complaint procedures.]

From Others

No person or group will sell, circulate, distribute, or post on any district premises written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that is not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization, except as permitted by policy GKDA.

To be considered for distribution, any nonschool 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 principal for prior review. The principal 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 DGBA or GF for more information.]

The principal has designated message boards as the location for approved non school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

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 policy 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 nonschool materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

Dress and Grooming (All Grade Levels)

The district's dress code teaches grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, and minimizes safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

<p>Appropriate Attire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students are expected to come to school in clothes that are clean, neatly kept, and modest in nature. ● Pants must be worn with the waist at the natural waistline, and shirts or blouses must be buttoned. Holes in pants are allowed provided they are located below the length permissible for shorts. ● All students must wear shoes and appropriate undergarments. ● Shorts must have a 5-inch inseam. Skirts/dresses must extend to 4 inches above the top of the knee. ● Students may wear shirts and blouses that are neat, clean, properly buttoned, and worn in a manner appropriate for the educational environment. ● Shirts or blouses must have a 2-inch shoulder strap (approximately 3 fingers), and more than one shirt may not be used to reach this minimum. ● Leggings/yoga pants must be worn with a shirt, blouse, skirt or tunic that covers the backside and front. Mesh panels in leggings (or any pants) must be mid thigh when arms are placed naturally at the side.
<p>Inappropriate or Unacceptable Attire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dresses or skirts approximately 4 inches above the top of the knee. ● Pants worn below the natural waistline or sagging, bagging, or extremely loose pants. ● No “track” shorts (with shorter than 5” inseams) with the exception of during the period for Physical Education/Athletics. ● Shirts or blouses that reveal undergarments or cleavage; any top showing a student’s bare midriff when hands/arms are extended in any direction is not permitted. ● Muscle shirts, shirts with oversized armholes, or backless shirts or tops are not permitted. Undergarments should not be visible in the armhole area. ● Clothing made of any see-through material, fish net, or loosely-woven fabric, unless other acceptable clothing is worn underneath.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Bedtime attire, pajamas, undershirts or undergarments may not be worn as outerwear. ●Slippers or houseshoes, or shoes with wheels (Heelys) are not allowed at school. ●Hats, caps, beanies, bandanas, or other head coverings (including hoods on jackets), or sunglasses are not allowed to be worn in the building. With administrative approval, hats and caps may be worn during extracurricular, school-sponsored activities.
<p>Appropriate Grooming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●All students will exemplify grooming standards that project a positive image for the student, school, and District. ●Students should keep their hair clean and neatly groomed. Hair should not be worn in a manner as to be a danger, distraction, and/or interfere in the educational process. Hair should not cover a student’s eyes or obstruct a student’s vision at any time. Hairbands may be worn to ensure proper vision at all times. ●Students’ hair must be a natural color or shade.
<p>Inappropriate Grooming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Distracting or extreme hairstyles and unnatural hair colors or shades are not allowed. ●No sculpted/shaved designs in eyebrows will be allowed.
<p>Clothing with Words or Pictures</p>	<p>Clothing worn at school or school-related or sanctioned activities may not display printed statements or pictures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are vulgar or obscene; - are related to or depict sexual activity; - that promote hate or violence in general or are directed at any specific person or group of persons; or - are related to depict the use of drugs, alcohol, guns, ammunition, or tobacco

<p>Jewelry, Tattoos, Body Piercing</p> <p>Gang Attire and Grooming</p> <p>Other Guidelines</p> <p>Principal's Authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Students may wear earrings that are appropriate and not distracting. ●No nose, tongue, or other facial piercings will be allowed for any students. Small studs in the nose are permissible. Only flesh-colored spacers will be allowed in other existing piercings. ●Pins, spikes, mouth jewelry, and“gauge” piercing are not permitted for any students. ●Tattoos (including temporary tattoos) must be completely covered while on campus and during school-related events. ●Clothing, grooming or any attire that identifies or connects a student with a gang is prohibited. The principal will stay updated on clothing items that are deemed to be gang-related. ●Blankets or pillows are not allowed to be brought to school. ●The district reserves the right to prohibit any clothing or grooming style that the administration determines to pose health or safety hazards or that may cause the disruption of, a distraction from, or interference with general school operations. The district also reserves the right to alter the dress code for special occasions or circumstances as deemed necessary by the campus administrator.
	<p>With the ever-changing fashions and fads, the administration reserves the right to determine acceptability regarding items that may not be specifically addressed within this handbook.</p> <p>Extracurricular activities are also subject to any additional requirements set forth by the sponsor or coach.</p> <p>If the administration determines that a student’s grooming or clothing violates the Ponder school dress and grooming standards, the student will be expected to return to compliance with the policy. If the student voluntarily complies, they will promptly be returned to class; otherwise, disciplinary actions may be implemented and parents will be notified. Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.</p>

Electronic Devices and Technology Resources (All Grade Levels)

The district is committed to ensuring that students use technology safely and will follow all federal and state requirements to protect students from excessive data collection or materials that are considered harmful to minors. The district considers parents as partners in cybersecurity and online safety.

In accordance with state and federal law, the district will:

- Install a filter that blocks and prohibits pornographic or obscene materials or applications, including from unsolicited pop-ups, installations, and downloads, before transferring an electronic device to a student to be used for an educational purpose
- Block or filter students' internet access to pictures that are obscene, contain child pornography, or have been determined to be harmful to minors in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
- Require direct and informed parental consent for a student's use of software, other than software excluded from the consent requirement by law [See Required State Assessments and Standardized Testing]
- Require direct and informed parental consent for a student's use of software that conducts mental health assessments or other assessments unrelated to education curricula that are intended to collect information about students [See Consent to Conduct a Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluation]

If you want to know more about partnering with the district regarding cybersecurity and online safety, or if you have complaints or concern about student use of electronic devices, please contact the campus principal.

[See Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials (All Grade Levels)]

Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Cell Phones, and Other Electronic Devices

In accordance with state law, the district prohibits the use of a personal communication device (such as cell phones, tablets, and smartwatches) while on school property during the school day. For more information about permitted use in certain circumstances and disciplinary measures that apply to this prohibition, see the Student Code of Conduct and policy FNCE(LOCAL).

The use of cell phones 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 personal communications device without authorization during the school day, the student will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

The *parent* may pick up the confiscated communications device from the principal's office.

Confiscated communications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parent will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE for more information.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal communications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See Searches and Investigations and policy FNF for more information.]

The district is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen communications devices.

Instructional Use of Personal Electronic Devices

Students must obtain prior approval to use personal electronic devices allowed by law for instructional purposes while on campus. The district may not permit use of a prohibited personal communication device except as required by law. [See Possession and Use of Personal Communications Devices, Including Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices] Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook). (Approvals for medical or disability reasons must be documented and approved by district personnel.

All personal devices must be turned off during the instructional day when not in use for approved instructional purposes. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources

District-owned technology resources may be issued to individual students for instructional purposes. Use of the district's network systems and equipment is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether on district-owned or personally owned equipment, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content — commonly referred to as “sexting” — will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement.

This type of behavior may constitute bullying or harassment, as well as impede future endeavors of a student. We encourage parents to review with their child the ["Before You Text" Sexting Prevention Course](https://txssc.txstate.edu/tools/courses/before-you-text/) (<https://txssc.txstate.edu/tools/courses/before-you-text/>), a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of sexting.

In accordance with state law, the district prohibits the installation or use of TikTok or any successor application or service on a district device, along with any other social media application or service determined by the governor.

Any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of the district's computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. In some cases, the consequence may be expulsion.

End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments **[Standardized Testing]**

Emergent Bilingual Students (All Grade Levels)

A student who is an emergent bilingual student is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), consisting of both district personnel and at least one parent representative, will determine whether the student qualifies for services. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible.

To determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a State required assessment. If the student qualifies for services, and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs that 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 state-mandated assessments. The STAAR Spanish, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing**, may be administered to an emergent bilingual student up to grade 5. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to emergent bilingual students who qualify for services.

If a student is considered an emergent bilingual student and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student's ARD committee will make instructional and assessment decisions in conjunction with the LPAC.

Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations (All Grade Levels)

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships.

Some extracurricular activities may include off-campus events. Students are required to use transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor. [See **Transportation**]

Eligibility for 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. Students and parents can access the [UIL Parent Information Manual \(https://www.uil-texas.org/athletics/manuals\)](https://www.uil-texas.org/athletics/manuals) online. A hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request.

To report alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of TEA at (512) 463-9581 or curriculum@tea.texas.gov.

[See [UIL Texas \(https://www.uil texas.org/\)](https://www.uil texas.org/) for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.]

Student safety in extracurricular activities is a priority of the district. Parents are entitled to review the district's records regarding the age of each football helmet used by the campus, including when a helmet has been reconditioned.

Generally, a student who receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in any academic class may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

However, if a student receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB), honors, or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or languages other than English, the student remains eligible for participation in all extracurricular activities.

If a student is enrolled in a state-approved course that requires demonstration of the mastery of an essential knowledge and skills in public performance and the student receives a grade below 70 in any course at the end of the grading period, the student may participate in a performance so long as the general public is invited.

If a student is enrolled in a state-approved music course that participates in UIL Concert and Sight-reading Evaluation, and the student receives a grade below 70 in any course at the end of a grading period, the student may not perform with the ensemble during the UIL evaluation performance, and is ineligible for other extracurricular activities for at least three weeks.

In addition, the following applies to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives special education services and 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 but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to 10 absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of 5 absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of 2 absences for state 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 be considered 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 board policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

Offices and Elections

Certain clubs, organizations, and performing groups will hold elections for student officers. These groups include but are not limited to,:

Student Council

Class Officers

FFA Officers

Fees (All Grade Levels)

Basic educational program materials are provided at no charge to a student. However, a student is expected to provide his or her own supplies, such as pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks. A student may also be required to pay certain other costs, fees, or deposits, including:

- Materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations.
- Admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, and the like.
- Voluntarily purchased student health and 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.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require 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. [See **Buses and Other School Vehicles.**]
- A fee for an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit or has not been awarded a final grade because of absences and whose parent chooses the program for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirements.
- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN).

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay or complete a payment plan. Application for such a waiver may be made to the campus administrative office. [See policy FP for more information.]

Fundraising (All Grade Levels)

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes in accordance with administrative regulations. [See policies FJ and GE for more information.]

Gang-Free Zones (All Grade Levels)

Certain criminal offenses, including gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next-highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. Gang-free zones include a school bus and any location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

Gender-Based Harassment

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

Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels)

Approved grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines establish:

- The minimum number of assignments, projects, and examinations required for each grading period
- How the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (for example, letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, and the like)
- Circumstances under which a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination the student originally failed
- Procedures for a student to follow after an absence
- Grading consequences for academic dishonesty, including cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism (including the unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT), and unauthorized communication between students during an examination

[See Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels) for additional information on grading guidelines.]

Approved grading guidelines for each grade level are listed below:

- Secondary-
 - Level 1 & 2 classes (On level): 60% Formative; 40% Summative
 - Minimum of 3 Summatives & 12 Formatives per 9 weeks
 - Level 3 (Advanced High School Credit): 50% Formative; 50% Summative
 - Minimum of 3 Summatives & 12 Formatives per 9 weeks
- Semester exams will be administered at all secondary campuses and will count for **10% of the semester grade** for each course. Students do have the ability to be exempt from the semester exams based on grades, attendance, and discipline. For students who are exempt from the semester exam, the semester grade will be calculated solely based on the two nine-week grading periods. Please reach out to the campus administrator if you have specific questions.

- Elementary-
 - 70% Formative; 30% Summative
 - Minimum of 3 Summatives & 12 Formatives per 9 weeks

*Additional information will be provided by the campus.

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** for additional information on grading guidelines.]

Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Requirements for a Diploma

A student must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma from the district:

- Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by state law
- Complete the required number of credits established by the state and any additional credits required by the district
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state
- Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by the district, in the specific communication skills required by the State Board of Education (SBOE)
- Complete and submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) or a Texas application for state financial aid (TASFA)

Testing Requirements for Graduation

Students are required, with limited exceptions and regardless of graduation program, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments:

- English I
- English II
- Algebra I
- Biology
- U.S. History

A student who does not achieve a sufficient score will have opportunities to retake an assessment.

State law allows a student to meet EOC requirements by substituting satisfactory performance on approved national standardized assessments or on the state-developed assessment used for entrance into Texas public universities. [See the school counselor for more information on the state testing requirements for graduation.]

If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, the district will provide remediation in the applicable content area. This may require the student's participation outside normal school operating times.

In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on up to two of the required assessments may still be eligible to graduate if an individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, unanimously determines that the student is eligible to graduate.

[See Standardized Testing]

Foundation Graduation Program

Every Texas public school student will graduate under the foundation graduation program. The foundation graduation program features endorsements, which are paths of interest that include:

- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
- Business and Industry
- Public Service
- Arts and Humanities
- Multidisciplinary Studies

Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student's transcript.

A student can complete the foundation graduation program with a "distinguished level of achievement," which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits.

Personal Graduation Plans will be completed for each high school student.

State law generally prohibits a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement. However, after the student's sophomore year, the student and student's parent may request that the student graduate without an endorsement. The district will advise the student and the student's parent of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement. The student and the student's parent must then submit written permission to the school counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement.

A student who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether graduation under the foundation program without an endorsement will satisfy the admission requirements of the student's desired college or university.

A student graduating under the foundation graduation program can also earn performance acknowledgments on their transcript. Performance acknowledgments are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and biliteracy, in a dual credit course, on an AP or IB examination, on certain national college preparatory and readiness or college entrance examinations, or for earning a license or certificate recognized at the state, national, or international level. The school counselor can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

A student is not required to complete an Algebra II course to graduate under the foundation graduation program, and the district will annually notify a student's parent of this fact. However, not taking Algebra II will make a student ineligible for automatic admission to four-year public

universities and colleges in Texas and for certain financial aid and grants while attending those institutions.

A school district will permit a student to satisfy the curriculum requirements for graduation under the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement, including an endorsement, by successfully completing courses in the core curriculum of a public Texas institution of higher education. Please see your counselor for more information.

Available Endorsements

A student must specify which endorsement to pursue upon entering grade 9.

Financial Aid Application Requirement

Before graduating from high school, each student must complete and submit an application for financial aid for post-secondary education. Students must complete and submit either a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) or a Texas application for state financial aid (TASFA).

Contact campus counselor for more information.

A student is not required to complete and submit a FAFSA or TASFA if:

- The student's parent submits a form provided by the district indicating that the parent authorizes the student to opt out
- A student who is 18 years of age or older or a legally independent minor submits a form provided by the district indicating that the student opts out
- A school counselor authorizes the student to opt out for good cause

Please contact the school counselor for more information.

To confirm that a student has completed and submitted a FAFSA or TASFA, the student must submit one of the following:

- A screenshot that includes the processed date field of the FAFSA ApplyTexas Counselor Suite
- Notification, such as a copy of an email, from the United States Department of Education verifying completion of the FAFSA
- A copy or screenshot of the FAFSA acknowledgment page
- A screenshot of the TASFA submission acknowledgment page (from those institutions that offer an electronic form)
- An acknowledgment receipt from an institution of higher education (IHE)
- A copy of a financial aid award letter from an IHE

Personal Graduation Plans

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each high school student.

The district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at least one endorsement and to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement is a requirement for a student

to be considered for automatic admission to a public four-year college or university in Texas, depending on their rank in class.

The school will review personal graduation plan options with each student entering grade 9 and the student's parent. Before the end of grade 9, a student and their parent will be required to sign off on a personal graduation plan that promotes college and workforce readiness, promotes career placement and advancement, and facilitates the transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

The student's personal graduation plan will outline an appropriate course sequence based on the student's choice of endorsement.

Please review [TEA's Graduation Toolkit](https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/brochures/tea-brochures) (<https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/brochures/tea-brochures>).

A student may, with parental permission, amend their personal graduation plan after the initial confirmation.

Available Course Options for All Graduation Programs

Each spring, the district will update students on the courses required or offered in each curriculum area so students can enroll for the upcoming school year.

Note: The district may require the completion of certain courses for graduation even if these courses are not required by the state for graduation.

Not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the district. A student who wants to take a course not offered at their regular campus should contact the school counselor about a transfer or other alternatives. If the parents of at least 22 students request a transfer for a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or career and technical education (CTE), the district will offer the course 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

Admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees will make instructional and assessment decisions for students with disabilities who receive special education services in accordance with state law.

Upon the recommendation of the ARD committee, a student with a disability who receives special education services may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of their individualized education program (IEP) and in accordance with state rules.

A student who receives special education services may earn the distinguished level of achievement or an endorsement under the foundation program. If the student's curriculum

requirements for the endorsement were modified, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the modified curriculum is sufficiently rigorous to earn the distinguished level of achievement or endorsement. The ARD committee must also determine whether the student must perform satisfactorily on any end-of-course assessment to earn an endorsement.

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school but has not met the requirements of their IEP may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. The student may then remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn a high school diploma but will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

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

Students who are eligible to graduate but are assigned to a disciplinary alternative education program at the end of the school year will not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and related graduation activities.

The following students and student groups shall be recognized at graduation ceremonies:

- Top 10 Ranked Students in the Class
- Valedictorian & Salutatorian
- Scholarship Winners
- Enlisted Students

The following cords may be worn during graduation ceremonies: Top 10; Blood Drive; CCMR; CTE; NHS; OnRamps; NCTC; PALS; Service; Hope Squad; Biliteracy; Enlistment; FFA; Student Council; Any other cord awarded and given by PHS.

[See **Student Speakers** for student speakers at other school events.]

Harassment

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

Hazing (All Grade Levels)

Hazing is defined as an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in a student organization if the act meets the elements in Education Code 37.151, including:

- Any type of physical brutality
- An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances
- An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the Penal Code
- Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated

The district will not tolerate hazing. Disciplinary consequences for hazing will be 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 in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal, superintendent, or law enforcement official.

[See **Bullying** policies FFI and FNCC for more information.]

Health — Physical and Mental

Illness (All Grade Levels)

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not be attending that day.

State rules require schools to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for certain periods of time. For example, if a child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications. Students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea-free without use of diarrhea-suppressing medications for 24 hours.

A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school nurse.

If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

The district is required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from DSHS on these notifiable conditions.

The school nurse is available to answer any questions for parents who are concerned about whether or not their child should stay home.

Immunization (All Grade Levels)

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons 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. You may access the [DSHS exemption form \(https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunization-unit/texas-school-child-care-facility-immunization/texas-immunization-exemptions\)](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunization-unit/texas-school-child-care-facility-immunization/texas-immunization-exemptions) online or by writing to this address:

Texas Department of State Health Services
Immunization Section, Mail Code 1946
P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347

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, tetanus, and pertussis
- Polio
- Measles, mumps, and rubella
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Meningococcal
- Hepatitis A

The school nurse can provide information on immunization requirements. 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. registered and licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or a member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a lifelong condition.

For information on immunization against bacterial meningitis and college enrollment and attendance, see **Bacterial Meningitis**.

[See the DSHS's [Texas School & Child Care Facility Immunization Requirements](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunization-unit/texas-school-child-care-facility-immunization) (<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunization-unit/texas-school-child-care-facility-immunization>) and policy FFAB(LEGAL) for more information.]

Lice (All Grade Levels)

Head lice is very common among children. Although not an illness or a disease, head lice spread through head-to-head contact during play, sports, nap time, and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to discuss a treatment plan using an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student undergoes one treatment, the parent should contact the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments, how best to get rid of lice, and how to prevent lice from returning.

The district will provide notice to parents of elementary school students in an affected classroom without identifying the student with lice.

More information on head lice is available on the DSHS website [Managing Head Lice in School Settings and at Home](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/skilled-procedures-texas-school-health/managing-head-lice-school) (<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/skilled-procedures-texas-school-health/managing-head-lice-school>) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website [About Head Lice](https://www.cdc.gov/lice/about/head-lice.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/lice/about/head-lice.html>).

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

Administrative Guidelines for Head Lice (Pediculosis)

If live lice are found on the student, then the student must be sent home. If only nits are found on the student, then the student may return to class for the rest of the school day. If a student has evidence of pediculosis (live lice and/or nits), the student must be treated before coming back to school.

Before returning to school, the student must be assessed and cleared of lice by the School Nurse. If the student is not cleared by the School Nurse, he/she will be sent home for additional care.

The student must be re-checked again by the School Nurse before returning to class.

The district will provide notice to parents of elementary school students in the affected classroom without identifying the student with lice.

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

More information on head lice can be obtained from the DSHS website [Managing Head Lice in School Settings and at Home](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/skilled-procedures-texas-school-health/managing-head-lice-school) (<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/skilled-procedures-texas-school-health/managing-head-lice-school>) and from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website [Head Lice Information for Parents](https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/parents.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/parents.html>).

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

Medicine at School (All Grade Levels)

If a student must take medication during school hours, the student's parent must provide the medication. All medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be kept in the nurse's office and be administered by the nurse or another authorized district employee. A student may be authorized to possess his or her own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy as described below or as otherwise allowed by law.

The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student.

In accordance with policy FFAC, authorized employees 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 provided by the parent along with a written request.
- Nonprescription medication in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request. **Note:** Insect repellent is considered a nonprescription medication.
- 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.

An elementary or secondary student may possess and self-apply sunscreen to avoid overexposure to the sun. An elementary student's teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to the

student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and asks for help applying it. If a secondary student needs assistance with sunscreen application, please address the need with the school nurse.

Whether a student is at the elementary or secondary level, if sunscreen needs to be administered to treat any type of medical condition, this should be handled through communication with the school nurse so that the district is made aware of any safety and medical issues.

Asthma and Severe Allergic Reactions

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may 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 health-care provider and 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.

See also **Food Allergies**.

Unassigned Epinephrine Auto-injectors

In accordance with Chapter 38, Subchapter E of the Education Code, the board has adopted a policy to allow authorized school personnel who have been adequately trained to administer an unassigned epinephrine auto-injector to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

An "unassigned epinephrine auto-injector" is an epinephrine auto-injector prescribed by an authorized health-care provider in the name of the school issued with a non-patient-specific standing delegation order for the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector.

Epinephrine auto-injectors include brand-name devices such as EpiPens®.

Authorized and trained individuals may administer an epinephrine auto-injector at any time to a person experiencing anaphylaxis on a school campus.

The district will ensure that at each campus a sufficient number of school personnel are trained to administer epinephrine so that at least one trained individual is present on campus during regular school hours and whenever school personnel are physically on site for school-sponsored activities.

Authorized and trained individuals may administer an unassigned epinephrine auto-injector to a person experiencing anaphylaxis at an off-campus school event or while in transit to or from a school event when an unassigned epinephrine auto-injector is available.

For additional information, see FFAC(LOCAL).

Unassigned Medication for Respiratory Distress

In accordance with Chapter 38, Subchapter E of the Education Code, the board has adopted a policy to allow authorized and trained school personnel to administer a medication for respiratory distress on a school campus or at a school-related activity to a person reasonably believed to be experiencing symptoms of respiratory distress.

The district will provide at each campus school personnel who are trained to administer prescription medication for respiratory distress during regular school hours.

“Unassigned medication for respiratory distress” means albuterol, levalbuterol, or another medication designated by the executive commission of the Health and Human Services Commission for treatment of respiratory distress, prescribed by an authorized health-care provider in the name of the district with a non-patient-specific standing delegation order for the administration of a medication for respiratory distress, and issued by an authorized health-care provider.

For additional information, see FFAC(LOCAL).

Unassigned Opioid Antagonists (All Grades)

In accordance with Chapter 38, Subchapter E of the Education Code, the board has adopted a policy to allow authorized and trained school personnel at each campus to administer an opioid antagonist, such as Narcan or Naloxone, to an individual who is reasonably believed to be experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose.

One or more authorized and trained individuals will be present on each campus subject to this policy during regular school hours.

Steroids (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for physician-prescribed medical use only.

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.

Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)

The district has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

- Mental health promotion and early intervention
- Building skills to manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and engage in responsible decision-making
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (interventions after a suicide in a community)
- Grief, trauma, and trauma-informed care
- Positive behavior interventions and supports
- Positive youth development
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates

The district uses Pulse and TCHAT to assess and provide mental health support as appropriate.

If a student has been hospitalized or placed in residential treatment for a mental health condition or substance abuse, the district has procedures to support the student's return to school. Please contact the district's mental health liaison, *Cindy Fraser- cfraser@ponderisd.net*, for further information.

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 psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication that is intended to alter perception, emotion, mood, or behavior.

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. [See policy FFEB for more information.]

For related information, see:

- **Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation and Consent to Provide a Mental Health Care Service** for the district's procedures for recommending a mental health intervention and the mental health liaison's contact information;
- **Counseling** for the district's comprehensive school counseling program;
- **Physical and Mental Health Resources** on for campus and community mental and physical health resources; and
- **Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health** for board-adopted policies and administrative procedures that promote student health.

Physical Activity Requirements

The district will ensure that students in full-day prekindergarten - grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week, in accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA.

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

Junior High/Middle School

The district will ensure that students in middle or junior high school will engage in at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within each two-week period for at least four semesters], in accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA.

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

Temporary Restriction from Participation in Physical Education

Students who are temporarily restricted from participation in physical education will not actively participate in skill demonstration but will remain in class to learn the concepts of the lessons.

Physical Fitness Assessment (Grades 3-12)

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3-12 who are enrolled in a physical education course or a course for which physical education credit is awarded. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year by contacting:

Marcus Shultz
Athletic Director
400 West Bailey Street
Ponder, Texas 76259
mshultz@ponderisd.net

Physical Health Screenings/Examinations

Athletics Participation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

For certain extracurricular activities, a student must submit certification from an authorized health-care provider. The certification must state that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the relevant program, including:

- A district athletics program
- District marching band
- Any district extracurricular program identified by the superintendent

This examination is required to be submitted annually to the district.

Students should be aware of the rare possibility of sudden cardiac arrest, which in athletes is usually caused by a previously unsuspected heart disease or disorder. A student may request an electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) to screen for such disorders, in addition to his or her required physical examination.

See the UIL's explanation of [sudden cardiac arrest](https://www.uiltexas.org/health/info/sudden-cardiac-death) (<https://www.uiltexas.org/health/info/sudden-cardiac-death>) for more information.

Spinal Screening Program

School-based spinal screening helps identify adolescents with abnormal spinal curvature at an early stage when the curve is mild and may go unnoticed. Early detection is key to controlling spinal deformities. Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted in accordance with the most recent nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards.

All students who meet the Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. As appropriate, students will be referred for follow-up with their physician.

For information on spinal screening by an outside professional or exemption from spinal screening based on religious beliefs, contact the superintendent or see policy FFAA(LEGAL).

Other Examinations and Screenings (All Grade Levels)

Students are required to undergo a risk assessment for Type 2 diabetes at the same time the district screens students for hearing and vision issues or for abnormal spinal curvatures.

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

Special Health Concerns (All Grade Levels)

Bacterial Meningitis (All Grade Levels)

Please see the district's website at [Ponder ISD](#) for information regarding meningitis.

Note: Entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

[See **Immunization**]

Diabetes

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) for more information.]

Food Allergies (All Grade Levels)

Parents should notify the district when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially an allergy that could result in dangerous or life-threatening reactions either by breathing, eating, or touching the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, based on the Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) *Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies at Risk for Anaphylaxis* found on the DSHS [Allergies and Anaphylaxis](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/allergies-anaphylaxis) website (<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/allergies-anaphylaxis>)

When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, an individual care plan will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment.

[See **Celebrations** and policy FFAF for more information.]

Seizures (All Grade Levels)

To address the care of a student with a seizure disorder while at school or participating in a school activity, a parent may submit a seizure management and treatment plan to the district before the beginning of the school year, upon enrollment of the student, or as soon as practicable following diagnosis of a seizure disorder.

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** and contact the school nurse for more information.]

Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited (All Grade Levels and All Others on School Property)

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarette (e-cigarette), or any other electronic vaporizing device while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of all tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or any other electronic vaporizing device by students and all others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policies FNCD and GKA for more information.]

Health-Related Resources, Policies, and Procedures

Physical and Mental Health Resources (All Grade Levels)

Parents and students in need of assistance with physical and mental health concerns may contact the individual campus nurse/assistant and/or the individual campus counselor.

- The local public health authority, Texas Health and Human Services, which may be contacted at [Texas Health and Human Services](#).
- The local mental health authority, Texas Health and Human Services, which may be contacted at [Texas Health and Human Services](#).

Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health (All Grade Levels)

The district has adopted board policies that promote student physical and mental health. (LOCAL) policies on the topics below can be found in the district's policy manual, available at the [Board Policy Online](#).

- Food and nutrition management: CO, COA, COB
- Wellness and Health Services: FFA
- Physical Examinations: FFAA
- Immunizations: FFAB
- Medical Treatment: FFAC
- Communicable Diseases: FFAD
- School-Based Health Centers: FFAE
- Care Plans: FFAF
- Crisis Intervention: FFB
- Trauma-informed Care: FFBA
- Student Support Services: FFC
- Student Safety: FFF
- Child Abuse and Neglect: FFG
- Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation: FFH
- Freedom from Bullying: FFI

In addition, the District Improvement Plan details the district's strategies to improve student performance through evidence-based practices that address physical and mental health.

The district has developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement the above policies and plans.

For further information regarding these procedures and access to the District Improvement Plan, please contact:

Dr. Patricia Dawson
Chief Officer
400 West Bailey Street
Ponder, Texas 76259
pdawson@ponderisd.net
940-479-8270

School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) (All Grade Levels)

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held 4 meetings. Additional information regarding the district's SHAC is available from the superintendent.

Notification of upcoming SHAC meetings will be posted at each campus administrative office at least 72 hours before the meeting. Notification of upcoming SHAC meetings, meeting minutes, and a recording of each meeting will be posted on the district website at [Ponder ISD SHAC](#).

[See **Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction, Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking**, and policies BDF and EHAA. For more information.]

Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan (All Grade Levels)

To encourage healthy habits in our students, the district has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement it. For questions about the content or implementation of the district's wellness policy and plan, please contact:

Teresa Hockaday
District Nurse
401 West Bailey St.
Ponder, Texas 76259
thockaday@ponderisd.net
940-479-8210

Homework (All Grade Levels)

Homework must have a "purpose." Research has shown that homework has different purposes at different grade levels. Homework for younger students develops positive attitudes and work habits while homework for older students develops or expands content or knowledge. Ponder ISD acknowledges the effectiveness of homework as a strategy to improve student performance.

Law Enforcement Agencies (All Grade Levels)

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,

including without parental consent, if necessary, if it 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 the student at school.
- Ordinarily make reasonable efforts to notify the parents, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- Ordinarily be present for the questioning or interview, 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 law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation.
- By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs to establish a student's identity where the child may have engaged in conduct indicating a need for supervision, such as running away.
- 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 (CPS), Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), 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 from a juvenile court to take a student into custody.

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

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will attempt to notify the parent, unless the legally 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 legally authorized person, 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 taken into custody, 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 has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors that occur in school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property. These personnel will also be notified if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe the student has engaged in certain conduct.
- All appropriate district personnel regarding a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

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

Leaving Campus (All Grade Levels)

Student attendance is crucial. Appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours if possible. Except for extenuating circumstances, students will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

Parental consent is required before any student leaves campus for any part of the school day.

For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or authorized adult must come to the office and show identification to sign the student out. A campus representative will ask the student to report to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow any unescorted adult to go to the classroom or other area to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.

The same process applies to students in high school if a parent picks the student up from campus. If the student's parent authorizes the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note for documentation purposes. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return if the student returns the same day.

If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school.

Unless the parent directs district personnel to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures listed above. If a student is permitted by his or her parent to leave campus unaccompanied, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released. Under no circumstances will a student in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied.

If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may sign him- or herself out of school. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

During Lunch

Ponder ISD has closed campus lunches and no student will be allowed to leave during lunch without a parent/guardian physically signing them out. Additionally, students may not have meals delivered via food delivery services (such as, but not limited to GrubHub, Uber Eats, Door

Dash). Students may only receive food deliveries from their parents/guardians. Parent/Guardians may NOT deliver food for any other student besides their own.

At Any Other Time during the School Day

Students are not permitted to leave campus during regular school hours unless they have the principal's permission or their parent/guardian physically signs them out. Additionally, students who are 16 or older and possess a driver's license may be signed out via phone or email by their parent/guardian for medical appointments only. After the appointment, the student must bring a medical note to the front office.

Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Lost and Found (All Grade Levels)

A lost and found collection box is located in the campus office. A student who loses an item should check the lost and found box. The district discourages bringing personal items of high monetary value to school, as the district is not responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus will dispose of lost and found items at the end of each semester.

Makeup Work

Makeup Work Because of Absence (All Grade Levels)

A teacher may assign makeup work to a student who misses class based on instructional objectives and the needs of the student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or meeting subject or course requirements.

The student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work within the time specified by the teacher. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

The student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time so that the teacher and student may plan any makeup work. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school. With limited exceptions, all absences count for the 90 percent threshold set in state law regarding attendance for credit or final grade. [See **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade.**]

A student involved in an extracurricular activity must notify his or her teachers ahead of time about any absences.

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

In-School Suspension (ISS) and Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) Makeup Work (All Grade Levels)

Alternative Means to Receive Coursework

While a student is in ISS or OSS, the district will provide the student with all course work for the student's foundation curriculum classes that the student misses as a result of the suspension.

Opportunity to Complete Courses

A student removed from the regular classroom to ISS 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) for more information.]

Nondiscrimination Statement (All Grade Levels)

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, the district does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The district provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the district's Title IX Coordinator (see below), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

Other federal laws that prohibit discrimination include Title VI, Section 504, the Age Discrimination Act, the Boy Scouts Act, and Title II.

The district has designated and authorized the following employee as the Title IX Coordinator to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or gender-based harassment:

Dr. Patricia Dawson
Title IX Coordinator
400 W Bailey St, Ponder, TX 76259
pdawson@ponderisd.net
940-479-8205

Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, phone, or email. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person. Upon the district receiving notice or an allegation of sex-based harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly respond in accordance with the process described at FFH(LOCAL).

The following district representatives have been designated to address concerns or inquiries about other kinds of discrimination:

- For concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, see the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator:

Daina Z Hunt
401 W Bailey St, Ponder TX 76259
dhunt@ponderisd.net
940-479-8274

- For all other concerns regarding discrimination, see the superintendent:

Erik Lokken
In-House Counsel
400 West Bailey St.
Ponder, Texas 76259
elokken@ponderisd.net
940-479-8208

[See policies FB, FFH, and GKD for more information.]

Parent and Family Engagement (All Grade Levels)

Parental Rights and Options

State law provides that a parent has the right to direct the moral and religious training of the parent's child, make decisions concerning the child's education, and consent to medical, psychiatric, and psychological treatment of the child without obstruction or interference from a governmental entity of Texas, including a school district.

In addition to referring to the rights of parents, including the right to withhold consent for or exempt the parent's child from certain activities and instruction specified throughout this handbook, parents may access additional information regarding parental rights on the district's website.

Working Together

Experience and research tell us that a child succeeds in education with good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. A parent's involvement and engagement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child every day 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 your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling.**]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office 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.**]

- Becoming a school volunteer. [See **Volunteers** and policy GKG for more information.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: Athletic Booster Club, Band Booster Club, Ag Booster Club, & Academic Booster Club.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees that develop educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For more information, see policies BQA and BQB and contact the campus principal.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and assisting the district in aligning local community values with health education instruction, human sexuality instruction, instruction on prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking, and other wellness issues. [See **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)** policies BDF, EHAA, FFA for more information.]
- Being aware of the school’s ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contact school officials if you are concerned with your child’s emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. Regular board meetings are held on the 4th Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Administration Building at 400 West Bailey Street. An agenda for a regular or special meeting is posted no later than 72 hours before each meeting at 400 West Bailey Street and online at www.Ponderisd.net [See policies BE and BED for more information.]

Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence (All Grade Levels)

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. 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 **Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on.]

State law requires that one minute of silence 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.

In addition, state law requires that each campus provide for the observance of one minute of silence in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day.

[See policy EC for more information.]

Prayer (All Grade Levels)

Each student has a right to pray individually, voluntarily, and silently or to meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt school activities. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or 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 proficiency. In making promotion decisions, the district will consider the following:

- Teacher recommendation
- Grades
- Scores on criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessments
- Any other necessary academic information as determined by the district

Promotion

In grades 2-8, promotion is based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course grade level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in three of the following areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

If a student in grade 8 is enrolled in a high-school credit course with a corresponding end-of-course (EOC) assessment, the student will not be subject to the promotion requirements described above for the relevant grade 8 assessment. The student will instead take the corresponding EOC assessment. If a student is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above his or her current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be required to take an applicable state-mandated assessment only for the course in which he or she is enrolled, unless otherwise required to do so by federal law.

Certain students—some with disabilities and some classified as English learners—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee meeting will be convened if a student receiving special education services fails to meet satisfactory performance after the first STAAR administration in reading or math. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education coordinator. For a student who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state mandated examinations, a school official will prepare an Accelerated Learning Plan (ALP). 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. [See the school counselor and policy EIF(LEGAL) for more information.] For a student receiving special education services, the student’s IEP may serve as the student’s (ALP) and would therefore be developed by the student’s ARD committee.

Repeating

A parent may request in writing that a student repeat prekindergarten, kindergarten, or any grade in grade 1-8. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

High School Grade Levels

To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level standards.

A student in grades 9-12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [See Grade-Level Classification (Grades 9-12 Only)]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See **Standardized Testing.**]

Repeating a High-School Credit Course

A parent may request in writing that a student repeat a high-school credit course in which the student was enrolled during the previous school year unless the district determines that the student has met all requirements for graduation.

Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

Release of Students from School

[See **Leaving Campus.**]

Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels)

Report cards with each student's performance and absences in each class or subject are issued at least once every 9 weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will receive a progress report if their child's performance in any course/subject area is near or below 70 or is below the expected level of performance. If a student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be asked to schedule a conference with the teacher. [See **Working Together** for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal pursuant to the board-adopted policy. Grading guidelines are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment. 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 **Grading Guidelines** and policy EIA(LOCAL) for more information.]

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.

The district may communicate academic information about a student electronically, including for progress reporting purposes.

SECONDARY:

Nine Week Grades for On Level Courses:

- a. 60 % Formative: minimum of 4 at 3 weeks, 8 at 6 weeks, and 12 at 9 weeks
- b. 40 % Summative: minimum of 3 per 9 weeks
- c. Incompletes (I) on the report card must be converted to a grade within one week of the end of the grading period.

Nine Week Grades for High School Credit Advanced Courses:

- d. 50 % Formative: minimum of 4 at 3 weeks, 8 at 6 weeks, and 12 at 9 weeks
- e. 50 % Summative: minimum of 3 per 9 weeks

- f. Incompletes (I) on the report card must be converted to a grade within one week of the end of the grading period.

Semester exams will be administered at all secondary campuses and will count for **10% of the semester grade** for each course. Students do have the ability to be exempt from the semester exams based on grades, attendance, and discipline. For students who are exempt from the semester exam, the semester grade will be calculated solely based on the two nine-week grading periods. Please reach out to the campus administrator if you have specific questions.

ELEMENTARY:

Nine Week Grades

- g. 70 % Formative: minimum of 4 at 3 weeks, 8 at 6 weeks, and 12 at 9 weeks
 - h. 30 % Summative: minimum of 3 per 9 weeks
 - i. Incompletes (I) on the report card must be converted to a grade within one week of the end of the grading period.
1. Each time a grade is recorded it is to apply to a specific component of an assignment.
 2. **Students may redo** formative and/or summative assignments that are below a 75 and submitted on time. To be eligible to redo an assignment/assessment the student must attend a minimum of one remediation period or tutorial.
 - a. The higher of the two grades will be recorded up to a 75.
 - b. Students will have 3 school days from when the grade is posted to redo the assignment/assessment.
 3. Grades must be entered into the grade book within five school days of assignment due date.
 4. Students shall have a time equal to days absent from class plus one day to complete all missed assignments.

Campus Late Work Policy:

Students may turn in an assignment up to 3 school days past the due date. The following grade deductions will apply:

- 1 day late = Maximum grade 90%
- 2 days late = Maximum grade 80%
- 3 days late = Maximum grade 70%

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that each campus or instructional level develops guidelines for teachers to follow in determining grades for students. These guidelines shall ensure that grading reflects a student's relative mastery of an assignment and that a sufficient number of grades are taken to support the grade average assigned. Guidelines for grading shall be clearly communicated to students and parents. The District shall permit a student who meets the criteria detailed in the grading guidelines a reasonable opportunity to redo an assignment or retake a test for which the student received a failing grade. (EIA)LOCAL The student shall have three school days from when the grade is posted in Ascender to redo the assignment.

The grading system provides a written report to the student and parents of a student's academic progress. The faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees expect academic excellence from all students. To reflect academic progress, grades will be given in each course.

Students will receive parent reports of student growth based on the state standards related to the grade level expectations.

Citizenship Grades (grades 2-12):

- | | |
|------------|---------------------|
| A 90 - 100 | E Excellent |
| B 80 - 89 | S Satisfactory |
| C 70 - 79 | N Needs Improvement |
| F below 70 | U Unsatisfactory |

Retaliation

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

Required State Assessments

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) for Grades 3-8

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels are required to take the state assessment, called STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3-8
- Reading, annually in grades 3-8
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

Standardized Testing for a Student Enrolled Above Grade Level

If a student in grades 3-8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above his or her current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be required to take an applicable state-mandated assessment only for the course in which he or she is enrolled, unless otherwise required to do so by federal law.

A student in grades 3-8 shall be assessed at least once in high school with the ACT or the SAT if the student completes the high school end-of-course assessments in mathematics, reading/language arts, or science prior to high school.

High School Courses End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments

STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I
- English I and English II
- Biology
- U.S. History

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments is required for graduation, unless waived or substituted as allowed by state law and rules.

There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment. The windows occur in the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have opportunities to retake the assessment.

Requesting Administration of STAAR/EOC in Paper Format (All Grade Levels)

STAAR and EOC assessments are administered electronically.

A parent or teacher may request that a STAAR or EOC be administered to a student in paper format. The district may grant this request for any single administration for up to three percent of the number of students enrolled in the district. Requests will be granted in the order in which they are received.

Requests for paper format for a fall administration of a STAAR or EOC must be submitted no later than September 15 each school year.

Requests for paper format for a spring administration of a STAAR or EOC must be submitted no later than December 1 each school year.

Standardized Testing for a Student in Special Programs

Certain students — some with disabilities and some classified as emergent bilingual students — may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services who meet certain criteria established by the state as determined by the student's ARD committee.

An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for a student receiving special education services will determine whether successful performance on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation within the parameters identified in state rules and the student's personal graduation plan (PGP).

STAAR Spanish is available for eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director

Failure to Perform Satisfactorily on STAAR or EOC

If a student does not perform satisfactorily on a required state assessment in any subject, the district will provide accelerated instruction for the student in the subsequent school year by:

- Assigning the student to a teacher who is certified as a master, exemplary, or recognized teacher if one is available in the grade and subject matter of the state assessment on which the student did not perform satisfactorily, or
- Providing supplemental instruction.

A student may be required to attend any assigned supplemental instruction program before or after school or during the summer.

When a student fails to perform satisfactorily on a required state assessment in the same subject area for two or more years, the district shall develop an accelerated education plan. Parents are encouraged to participate in developing this plan.

Personal Graduation Plans

Students who do not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated examination, a school official will prepare a personal graduation plan (PGP).

School officials will also develop a PGP for students who are determined by the district to be unlikely to earn a high school diploma within five years of high school enrollment. The plan will, among other items:

- Identify the student's educational goals.
- Address the parent's educational expectations for the student.
- Outline an intensive instruction program for the student.

[See the *school counselor* and policy EIF(LEGAL) for more information.]

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.

[See **Personal Graduation Plans** for information related to the development of personal graduation plans for high school students.]

Safety (All Grade Levels)

Student safety on campus, at school-related events, and in district vehicles is a high priority of the district. The cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student is expected to:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow all behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct or set by district employees.
- Help secure the campus by keeping all exterior doors closed, latched, and locked unless the door is actively monitored by a district employee.
- Follow instructions from teachers and other district employees regarding classroom doors.
- Remain alert to any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member, and promptly report any incidents to a district employee. A student may make anonymous reports about safety concerns by submitting them in writing to the office.
- 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.

Safe Storage of Firearms

A firearm should be stored unloaded in a safe or locked container, with ammunition stored elsewhere.

It is unlawful to store, transport, or abandon an unsecured firearm in a place where children are likely to be and can obtain access to the firearm. Under the Penal Code, a person commits the

offense of making a firearm accessible to a child if the child gains access to a readily dischargeable firearm, and the person with criminal negligence:

- Failed to secure the firearm; or
- Left the firearm in a place to which the person knew or should have known the child would gain access

The penalty for allowing a child access to a firearm can range from a Class C misdemeanor (punishable by a \$500 fine) to a Class A misdemeanor (punishable by a \$4000 fine, a year in jail, or a combination of the two).

Safety and Security of students, staff, and visitors

Ponder ISD implements the *Defender Program*. This program will ensure that every campus within our district has a trained and capable armed official, contributing to a secure environment where our students can learn and thrive without compromising their safety. The Defender Program exemplifies our dedication to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for all.

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.

Insurance for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs

The district may purchase accident, liability, or automobile insurance coverage for students and businesses involved in the district's CTE programs.

Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies

Periodically, the school will conduct preparedness drills of emergency procedures. When the command is given or alarm is sounded, students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Preparedness Training: CPR and Stop the Bleed

The district will offer instruction in CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) at least once to students enrolled in in grades 7-12. The instruction can be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR or AED certification.

The district will annually offer students in grades 7-12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see:

- [Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed \(https://www.dhs.gov/stopthebleed\)](https://www.dhs.gov/stopthebleed)
- [Stop the Bleed Texas \(https://stopthebleedtexas.org/\)](https://stopthebleedtexas.org/)

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

All parents are asked each year to complete a medical care authorization form, providing written parental consent to obtain emergency treatment and information about allergies to medications or drugs. Parents should contact the school nurse to update emergency care information (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, and the like).

The district may consent to medical treatment, including dental treatment, if necessary, for a student if:

- The district has received written authorization from a person having the right to consent;
- That person cannot be contacted; and
- That person has not given the district actual notice to the contrary.

The emergency care authorization form will be used by the district when a student's parent or authorized designee cannot be contacted. A student may provide consent if authorized by law or court order.

Regardless of parental authorization for the district to consent to medical treatment, district employees will contact emergency medical services to provide emergency care when required by law or when deemed necessary, such as to avoid a life-threatening situation.

Emergency School Closing Information

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that the district needs to notify parents of early dismissal, delayed opening, or restricted access to a campus because of severe weather, a security threat, or another emergency cause.

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes. State law requires parents to update contact information within two weeks after the date the information changes.

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will also alert the community in the following ways: message through Blackboard, the district website, and social media platforms.

[See **Parent Contact Information and Automated Emergency Communications.**]

SAT, ACT, and Other Standardized Tests

[See **Standardized Testing.**]

School Facilities

Asbestos Management Plan (All Grade Levels)

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district's asbestos management plan is available in the central administrative office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact the district's designated asbestos coordinator:

Kent Josselet
Coordinator of Operations
400 West Bailey Street
Ponder, Texas 76259
kjosselet@ponderisd.net
940-479-8200

Food and Nutrition Services (All Grade Levels)

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily in accordance with standards set forth in state and federal law.

Some students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. The district may share information such as a student's name and eligibility status to help enroll eligible children in Medicaid or the state children's health insurance program (CHIP) unless the student's parent requests the student's information not be disclosed.

Participating students will be offered the same meal options as their peers and will not be treated differently from their peers.

To apply for free or reduced-price meal services, contact your student's campus front office.

[See policy CO for more information.]

Parents should continually monitor their child's meal account balance. When a student's meal account is depleted, the district will notify the parent. The student may continue to purchase meals according to the grace period set by the school board. The district will present the parent with a schedule of repayment for any outstanding account balance and an application for free or reduced meals.

If the district is unable to work out an agreement with the student's parent on replenishment of the meal account and payment of any outstanding balance, the student will receive a meal. The district will make every effort to avoid bringing attention to the student.

The following information is published as required by the USDA for participation in the National School Lunch Program:

“In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

“Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

“To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. email:

Program.Intake@usda.gov

“This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”

The responsible state agency that administers the program is the [Texas Department of Agriculture](https://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/Contact-Us) (<https://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/Contact-Us>), which can be reached at (800) TELL-TDA (835-5832) or (800) 735-2989 (TTY).

The local agency that administers the program is the district. See **Nondiscrimination Statement** for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator, ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and superintendent for other concerns about discrimination.

Vending Machines (All Grade Levels)

The district has adopted and implemented the state and federal policies for food service, including guidelines to restrict student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines, see the principal. [See policy FFA for more information.]

Pest Management Plan (All Grade Levels)

The district is required to follow integrated pest management (IPM) procedures to control pests on school grounds. Although the district strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, periodic indoor and outdoor pesticide use is sometimes necessary to ensure a safe, pest-free school environment.

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area.

Parents who have questions or who want to be notified of the times and types of applications prior to pesticide application inside their child’s school assignment area may contact the district’s IPM coordinator:

Kent Josselet
Coordinator of Operations
400 W Bailey St, Ponder, TX 76259
kjosselet@ponderisd.net
940-479-8204

Conduct Before and After School (All Grade Levels)

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities. Whether a school activity is on or off district premises, students must follow the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day. Misbehavior 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.

Library (All Grade Levels)

The library is open for independent student use during the following times with a teacher permit. The library is maintained for the benefit of students and faculty between the hours of 7:15 a.m. and 3:45 p.m.

The district provides a wide range of library materials for students and faculty that support student achievement and present varying levels of difficulty, diversity of appeal, and a variety of points of view. The district follows the Texas State Library and Archive Commission's standards for school library collection development.

Parents are the primary decision makers regarding their student's access to library material. The district encourages parental involvement in library acquisition, maintenance, and campus activities. Parents are encouraged to communicate with Christy Hooper, District Librarian, and their child's teacher about special considerations regarding library materials self-selected by their student. A parent may submit to the district a list of library materials that their child may not be allowed to check out or otherwise access for use outside of the school library by submitting the list <https://www.ponderisd.net/page/ponder-isd-library-media-services>

The parent can access a list of books checked out by their child.
<https://www.ponderisd.net/page/ponder-isd-library-media-services>

A parent may access to the school's library or any available online catalog
<https://www.ponderisd.net/page/ponder-isd-library-media-services>

The district welcomes student and parent feedback on library materials and services. Parents may contact *Christy Hooper, District Librarian*, with questions or comments about their child's campus library. A district employee, parent, or person residing in the district may submit a written challenge to the inclusion of any library material in the catalog of the school library by submitting the form available on the district's website.

Use of Hallways during Class Time (All Grade Levels)

During class times, loitering or standing in the halls is not permitted, and 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.

Use by Students Before and After School (All Grade Levels)

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. Times vary based on campus.

- Cafeteria
- Pre-scheduled tutoring classrooms

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

Students must leave campus immediately after dismissal of school in the afternoon, unless the student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult.

Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

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.

School-Sponsored Field Trips (All Grade Levels)

The district periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes.

A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip.

The district may ask the parent to provide information about a student's medical provider and insurance coverage and may also ask the parent to sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip.

The district may require a fee for student participation in a field trip that is not required as part of a basic educational program or course to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however, a student will not be denied participation because of financial need. See **Fees (All Grade Levels)** for more information.

The district is not responsible for refunding fees paid directly to a third-party vendor.

Searches

Searches in General (All Grade Levels)

In the interest of promoting student safety and drug-free schools, district officials may occasionally conduct searches.

District officials may search students, their belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with law and district policy. Searches of students will be conducted without discrimination, based on, for example, reasonable suspicion or voluntary consent or pursuant to district policy providing for suspicionless security procedures, including the use of metal detectors.

In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, students are responsible for prohibited items found in their possession, including items in their personal belongings or in vehicles parked on district property.

If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that searching a student's person, belongings, or vehicle will reveal evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, a district official may conduct a search in accordance with law and district regulations.

District Property (All Grade Levels)

Desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the district and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. District property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice. Students have no expectation of privacy in district property.

Students are responsible for any item found in district property provided to the student that is prohibited by law, district policy, or the Student Code of Conduct.

Metal Detectors (All Grade Levels)

To maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment, the district reserves the right to subject students to metal detector searches when entering a district campus and at off-campus, school-sponsored activities.

Personal Communications and Other Electronic Devices (All Grade Levels)

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 electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

[See **Electronic Devices and Technology Resources** and policy FNF(LEGAL) for more information.]

Trained Dogs (All Grade Levels)

The district may use trained dogs to screen for concealed, prohibited items, including drugs and alcohol. Screenings conducted by trained dogs will not be announced in advance. The dogs will not be used with students, but students may be asked to leave personal belongings in an area that is going to be screened, such as a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle. If a dog alerts to an item or an area, it may be searched by district officials.

[See **Steroids.**]

Vehicles on Campus (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the district will contact the student's parents. If the parents also refuse to permit the vehicle to be searched, the district may turn the matter over to law enforcement. The district may contact law enforcement even if permission to search is granted.

Sexual Harassment

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

Special Programs (All Grade Levels)

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, students who are homeless, students in foster care, bilingual students, migrant students, emergent bilingual students, students diagnosed with dyslexia, 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 their student's campus principal.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission's [Talking Book Program](https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/index.html) (<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/index.html>) provides audiobooks free of charge to qualifying Texans, including students with visual, physical, or reading disabilities such as dyslexia.

Standardized 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. These assessments are typically taken during a student's junior year; however, students may choose to register and pay to take them earlier if desired. Students are encouraged to talk with the school counselor during their sophomore and/or early junior year to learn about these assessments and determine the appropriate examination to take. The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and ACT-Aspire are the corresponding preparatory and readiness assessments for the SAT and ACT.

Note: These assessments may qualify a student to receive a performance acknowledgment on the student's transcript under the foundation graduation program and may qualify as a substitute for an end-of-course testing requirement in certain circumstances. A student's performance at a certain level on the SAT or ACT also makes the student eligible for automatic admission to a Texas public institution of higher education.

TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment. The TSI assesses the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that first-year students need to perform effectively as undergraduates in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may also be required before a student enrolls in a dual credit course offered through the district. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

Tardies (All Grade Levels)

Promptness is a habit that is developed very early in life. All students are expected to be in the classroom and in their seats when the tardy bell rings. The four minutes between periods should be sufficient time for all students to get from one class to the next. A student who is tardy to class may be assigned to detention hall or given another appropriate consequence. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Tardies and consequences accrue per semester.

Generally, when the bell begins to ring, students who are not in the room are considered tardy

- There are no excused tardies
- Students needing to run an errand or go to the restroom between periods must obtain permission from their next period teacher. Failure to do so will result in a tardy if the student is late for class
- If a teacher/principal detains a student, student must bring a note to teacher explaining the situation

Tardy Policy:

Secondary:

1-2 Tardies – Warning

3 Tardies – Student Conference

4 Tardies – Zero Hour or Mega Lunch Detention

5 Tardies- 2 Zero Hour or Mega Lunch Detentions & Referral to Attendance Measures

6 Tardies- Friday or Saturday School

7+ Tardies- ISS

Elementary:

1-2 Tardies – Warning

3 Tardies – Parent Phone Call

4 Tardies – Parent Conference

5 Tardies- Refer to Attendance Measures

Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials (All Grade Levels)

Instructional materials are any resources used in classroom instruction as part of the required curriculum, such as textbooks, workbooks, computer software, or online services.

The district selects instructional materials in accordance with state law and policy EFA.

The district provides approved instructional materials to students free of charge for each subject or class. Students must treat instructional materials with care, as directed by the teacher.

If a student needs a graphing calculator for a course and the district does not provide one, the student may use a calculator application with graphing capabilities on a phone, laptop, tablet, or other computing device.

A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher.

Any student who does not return an item or returns an item in an unacceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage is paid for by the parent. However, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

For information on library books and other resources students may access voluntarily, see **Library (All Grade Levels)** .

Transfers (All Grade Levels)

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another.

The superintendent is authorized to investigate and approve transfers between schools.

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments, Bullying, and A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services**, for other transfer options.]

Transportation (All Grade Levels)

School-Sponsored Trips

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use school-provided transportation to and from the event. However, in accordance with campus procedures, a parent may provide written consent for his or her child to ride with or be released after the event to the parent or another adult designated by the parent. Many school sponsored trips will be made for the various activities in which students of Ponder participate. Parents and students are requested to study the following regulations concerning these trips, and by their compliance, help to make them most productive and safe.

- All students must ride to and from the site of the event by school arranged transportation unless the parents arrange with the sponsor of the activity for the student to return with the parent or parent appointed adult. Procedure: The parent will present the sponsor with a signed note requesting permission for his child to ride home with him or the adult appointee.
- Students must be eligible according to UIL guidelines, on the previous report card to be eligible to make a school sponsored trip. This may not apply to field trips made as part of class assignments.
- Students missing school on school sponsored trips will be counted as an activity absence (10 per year max).
- Students must observe all safety regulations while riding on school arranged transportation.

Those making school sponsored trips are expected to behave as stated in the Code of Conduct.

- No student will be permitted to participate in school arranged activities who has not attended school at least half of the day of the trip, without permission of the sponsor and the principal.
- Students are responsible for making arrangements concerning classroom assignments prior to the trip.

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use school-provided transportation to and from the event. However, in accordance with campus procedures, a parent

may provide written consent for his or her child to ride with or be released after the event to the parent or another adult designated by the parent.

[See **School-Sponsored Field Trips.**]

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school and to any students who are experiencing homelessness. This service is provided at no cost to students.

Bus routes and stops will be designated annually. Any subsequent changes will be posted at the school and on the district's website. For the safety of the driver and all passengers, students must board district vehicles only at authorized stops and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.

For additional information, please contact:

Terry Gleaton
Transportation Liaison
400 West Bailey Street
Ponder, Texas 76259
tgleaton@ponderisd.net
940-479-8282

A parent may designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated location must be an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, contact 940-479-8282.

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses and other district vehicles are clean and safe. 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 vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the vehicle 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 vehicle.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco or e-cigarettes in any district vehicle.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.

- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, including loss of the privilege to ride in a district vehicle.

Drivers shall instruct students about the following safety procedures:

- Students shall move well away from the side of the bus after leaving the bus.
- Students are not to rush onto the bus.
- Students are not to get the mail from the roadside mailbox until the bus has departed.
- If your student must cross the road, they shall be instructed to:
 - a) Move at least 10 giant steps in front of the bus before starting across the roadway.
 - b) Those students that must cross shall wait for the proper signal from the driver.
 - c) Stop at the traffic side of the bus, look left, right and left, and cross only when approaching traffic has stopped.
 - d) Walk.
 - e) Drivers shall count the number of students that leave the bus to cross the roadway and count again before leaving bus stop to account for all crossing students
- Students are to be at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to pick-up time. Students are required to wait a minimum of 20 feet from the edge of the roadway, in an orderly group, and remain there until the bus has come to a complete stop before loading.
- Students going to or from the bus should walk on the left side of the highway, on the shoulder, facing the oncoming traffic.

NOT FOLLOWING THESE RULES MAY COST YOUR BUS "PRIVILEGE"

- Follow the direction of the driver.
- Students shall comply with the Ponder ISD dress code on all buses.
- Be courteous, use no profane language.
- Do not eat or drink on the bus.
- Keep the bus clean.
- Co-operate with the driver.
- Do not smoke/or bring tobacco products on the bus.
- Do not damage the bus or equipment.
- The bus driver is required to assign seats. Students are expected to stay in your assigned seat.

- Students will remain properly seated at all times and will not block the center aisle.
- Keep head, hands, and feet inside the bus.
- Items should remain in student backpacks at all times.
- Do not pinch, fight, push, or shove.
- Do not spit.
- Students shall not cause their body fluids to make contact with other persons and or objects on the bus, off of the bus or out the window.
- Do not litter or throw objects.
- Do not tamper with bus equipment.
- Do not bring pets or other live animals on the bus.
- Do not bring flammable materials on the bus.
- Only leave the bus at your assigned stop as listed on the bus registration form.

Disruption of TRANSPORTATION ED. CODE 37.126 can result in a \$500.00 fine.

1st Offense: Student can receive a minimum of a warning notice, which will be sent to the parent. The notice will inform the parent of the offense which was committed.

2nd Offense: The student can receive a minimum of a 5-day suspension from the bus.

3rd Offense: The student can receive a minimum of a 10-day suspension from the bus.

4th Offense: the student can be suspended from the bus for the remainder of the semester. A transportation offense occurring after Thanksgiving in the fall or May 1st in the spring could result in the continuation of the suspension into the student's next semester.

**In addition to bus consequences, behaviors will be addressed according to the Code of Conduct for campus consequences. If any offense that is determined to be severe (jeopardizes safety), the student can be suspended from the bus and receive other disciplinary action.

[See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.]

Vandalism (All Grade Levels)

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 (All Grade Levels)

For safety purposes, the district uses video and audio recording equipment 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 and audio recordings as needed and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

In accordance with state law, a parent of a student who receives special education services, a staff member (as this term is defined by law), a principal or assistant principal, or the board may make a written request for the district to place video and audio recording equipment in certain self-contained special education classrooms. The district will provide notice before placing a video camera in a classroom or other setting in which a child receives special education services. For more information or to request the installation and operation of this equipment, contact the principal that the district has designated to coordinate the implementation of and compliance with this law.

[See policy EHBAF(LOCAL) for more information.]

[See **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law** for video and other recording by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms.]

Visitors to the School (All Grade Levels)

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:

- Request entry to the school at the primary entrance unless otherwise directed by a district employee.
- Report to the main office.
- Be prepared to show identification.
- Exit the school at the primary entrance and leave all exterior doors closed, latched, and locked unless actively monitored by a district employee.
- Comply with all applicable district policies and procedures.

If requested by a district employee, a visitor must provide identification such as a driver's license, other picture identification issued by a government entity, or employee or student identification issued by the district. A person who refuses to provide identification and who reasonably appears to have no legitimate reason to be on district property may be ejected from district property.

Individuals may visit classrooms or observe virtual instruction during instructional time only with approval of the principal and teacher. Visitors may not interfere with instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or violations of student privacy will not be permitted.

[See **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law** for video and other recordings by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms.]

Unauthorized Persons

In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator, school resource officer (SRO), or district police officer has the authority to refuse entry to or eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and:

- The person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person; or

- The person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and persists in the behavior after being given a verbal warning that the behavior is inappropriate and may result in refusal of entry or ejection.

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with policies FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL).

[See the Student Code of Conduct.]

Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students

Business, Civic, and Youth Groups

The district may invite representatives from patriotic societies listed in Title 36 of the United States Code to present information to interested students about membership in the society.

Career Day

On a date to be determined, the district invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

Volunteers (All Grade Levels)

The district invites and appreciates the efforts of volunteers who are willing to serve our district and students.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Human Resources: 940-479-8200.

Subject to exceptions in accordance with state law and district procedures, the district requires a state criminal history background check for each volunteer, including parents, guardians, or grandparents of a child enrolled in the district. The volunteer must pay all costs for the background check.

Withdrawing from School (All Grade Levels)

To withdraw a student under age 18 from school, the parent or guardian must submit a written request to the principal specifying the reasons for withdrawal and the final day the student will be in attendance. Withdrawal forms are available from the principal's office.

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

Please provide the school at least three days' notice of withdrawal so that records and documents may be prepared.

Glossary

Accelerated instruction, including supplemental instruction, is an intensive educational program designed to help an individual student acquire the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level. It is required when a student does not meet the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment. Accelerated instruction may be provided by assigning a student to a classroom teacher who is certified as a master, exemplary, or recognized teacher or by providing supplemental instruction in addition to regular instruction.

ACT, or the American College Test, is one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required for admission to certain colleges or universities.

ACT-Aspire is designed as a preparatory and readiness assessment for the ACT. This is usually taken by students in grade 10.

ARD stands for admission, review, and dismissal. The ARD committee convenes 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 responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent, or in some cases 75 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 or a final grade lost because of absences.

CPS stands for Child Protective Services.

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

DFPS stands for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

DPS stands for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

DSHS stands for the Texas Department of State Health Services.

ED stands for the U.S. Department of Education.

Emergent bilingual student refers to a student of limited English proficiency. Other related terms include English learner, English language learner, and limited English proficient student.

EOC (end-of-course) assessments are state-mandated and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments is required for graduation. These examinations will be given in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History.

ESSA is the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, which 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 years of age or older directs the school not to release directory information.

IEP stands for individualized education program and is the written record prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services.

IGC is the individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, to determine a student's eligibility to graduate when the student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory performance on no more than two of the required state assessments.

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.

PGP stands for personal graduation plan, which is required for high school students and for any student in middle school 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.

PSAT is the preparatory and readiness assessment for the SAT. It also serves as the basis for the awarding of National Merit Scholarships.

Safe and Supportive School Team is a team established at each campus that is responsible for conducting a threat assessment regarding individuals who make threats of violence or exhibit harmful, threatening, or violent behavior and determining appropriate intervention, and providing guidance to students and school employees on recognizing harmful, threatening, or violent behavior that may pose a threat to the community, school, or individual.

SAT refers to the Scholastic Aptitude Test, one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required 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 help ensure that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, as well as assist with other student and employee wellness issues.

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 Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments.

STAAR Alternate 2 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 Spanish is an alternative state-mandated assessment administered to eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

State-mandated assessments are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Except under limited circumstances, students must pass the STAAR EOC assessments to graduate. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests, if necessary, for graduation.

Student Code of Conduct is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed

from a classroom, campus, or district vehicle; sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP; and outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

TAC stands for the Texas Administrative Code.

TEA stands for the Texas Education Agency, which oversees primary and secondary public education in Texas.

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

TSI stands for the Texas Success Initiative, an assessment designed to measure the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering college-level freshmen students should have if they are to be successful in undergraduate programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

TXVSN stands for 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 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.

Appendix: Freedom from Bullying Policy

Note: School board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit Below is the text of Ponder ISD's policy FFI(LOCAL) as of the date this handbook was finalized for this school year.

Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying Policy FFI(LOCAL) adopted on *10/20/2022*

The District prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by state law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

Bullying of a student could occur by physical contact or through electronic means and may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.

The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other District employee. The Superintendent shall develop procedures allowing a student to anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying.

Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.

A report shall be made in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.

When an allegation of bullying is reported, the principal or designee shall notify a parent of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the incident is reported. The principal or designee shall also notify a parent of the student alleged to have engaged in the conduct within a reasonable amount of time after the incident is reported.

The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the

District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.

The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.

If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct. The District may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances.

A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action.

The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.

Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine whether any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against bullying.

The principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.

The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.

To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.

Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).

This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's website, to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

[Appendix: State Law Regarding Attendance and Truancy in Texas Public Schools](#)

**Proposed PISD Innovative Courses
2025-2026**

SPORTS MED 1- Sports Medicine 1
N1150040

SPORT MED 2- Sports Medicine 2
N1150041

HOPE SQUAD- Teen Leadership
N1290012

PAAL 1- Peer Assistance and Leadership 1
N1290005

PAAL 2- Peer Assistance and Leadership 2
N1290006

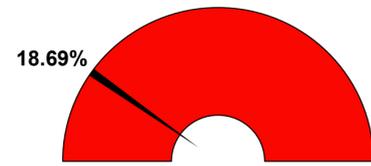
MAKE CONN 1 (STEP)- Making Connections
N1290332

GEN EMPL SKIL- General Employability Skills
N1270153

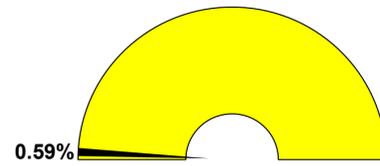
General Fund | Revenue Dashboard

For the Period Ending July 31, 2025

Projected Year End Fund Balance as % of Budgeted Revenues

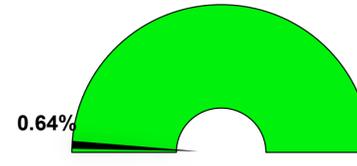


Actual YTD Revenues



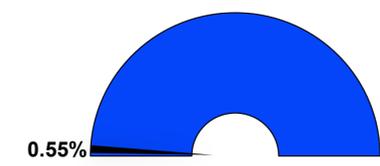
Projected YTD Revenues
3.94%

Actual YTD Local Sources



Projected YTD Local Sources
0.91%

Actual YTD State Sources



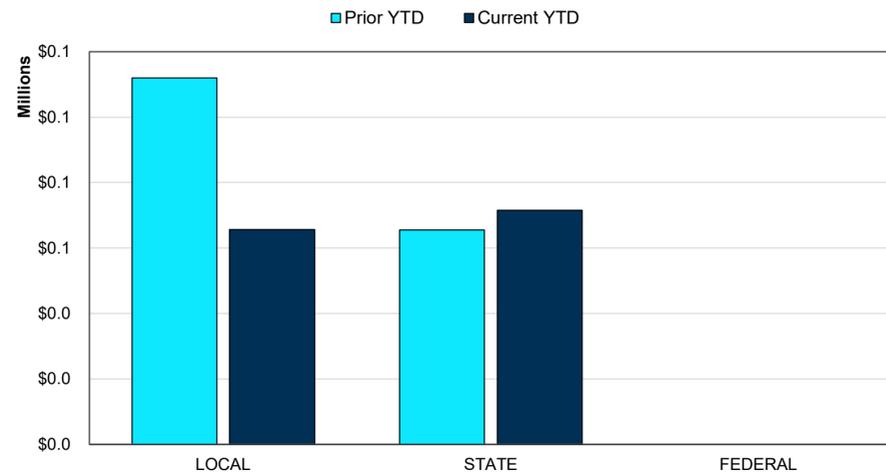
Projected YTD State Sources
6.35%

Top 10 Sources of Revenue Year-to-Date

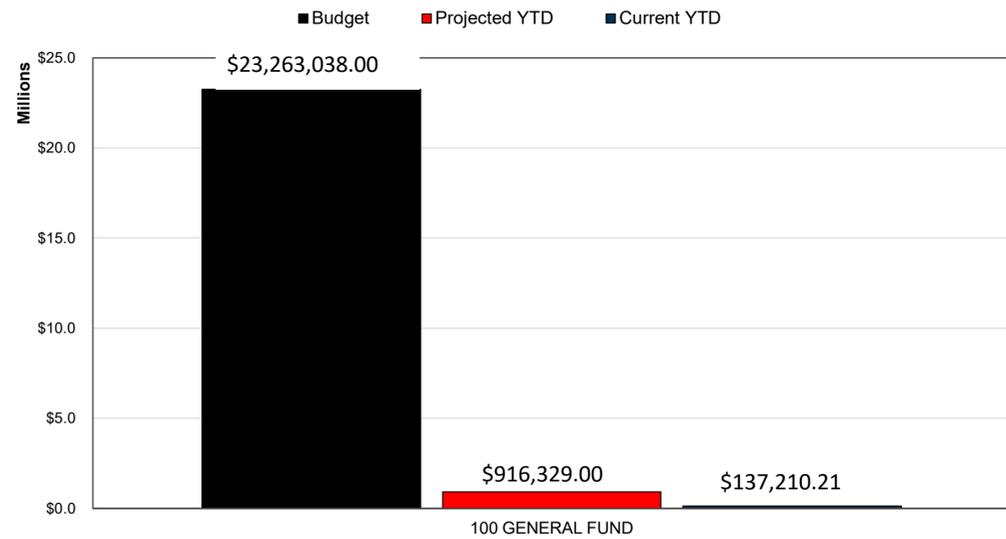
Trs On-Behalf	\$71,577
Taxes, Current Year Levy	\$33,594
Earnings From Temporary Deposits And Investments	\$30,170
Penalties, Interest, And Other Tax Revenues	\$5,623
Rent	\$1,200
Other Revenues From Local Sources	\$338
Tuition And Fees From Local Sources	\$0

Percent of Total Revenues YTD **103.86%**

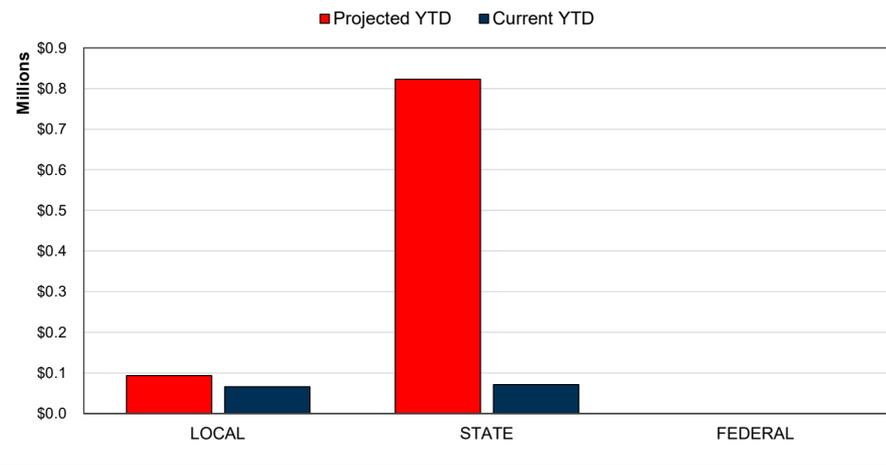
Revenue by Source



Revenue Comparison



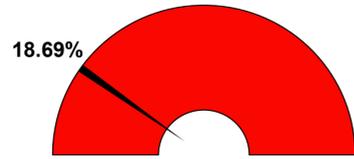
Revenue by Source



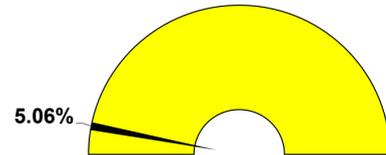
General Fund | Expenditure Dashboard

For the Period Ending July 31, 2025

Projected Year End Fund Balance as % of Budgeted Expenditures

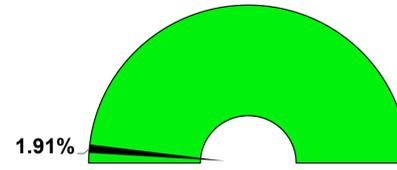


Actual YTD Expenditures



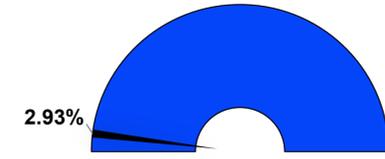
Projected YTD Expenditures
5.62%

Actual YTD Instruction



Projected YTD Instruction
2.95%

Actual YTD Payroll Costs



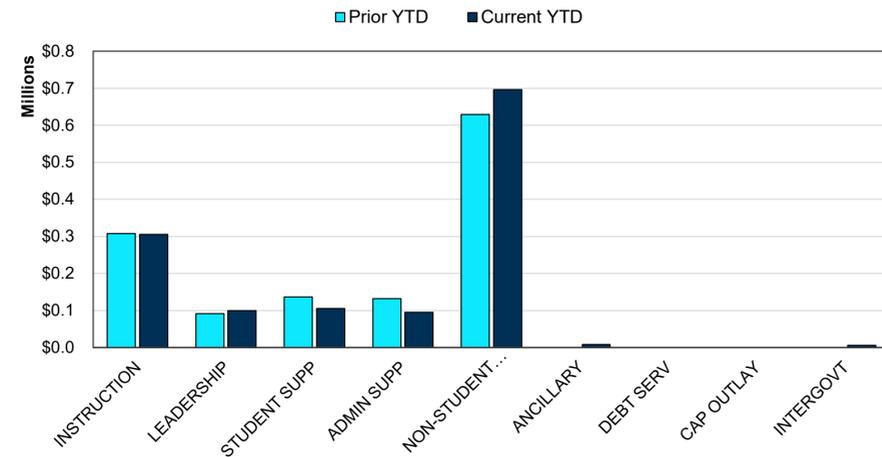
Projected YTD Payroll Costs
3.81%

Top 10 Expenditures by Function Year-to-Date

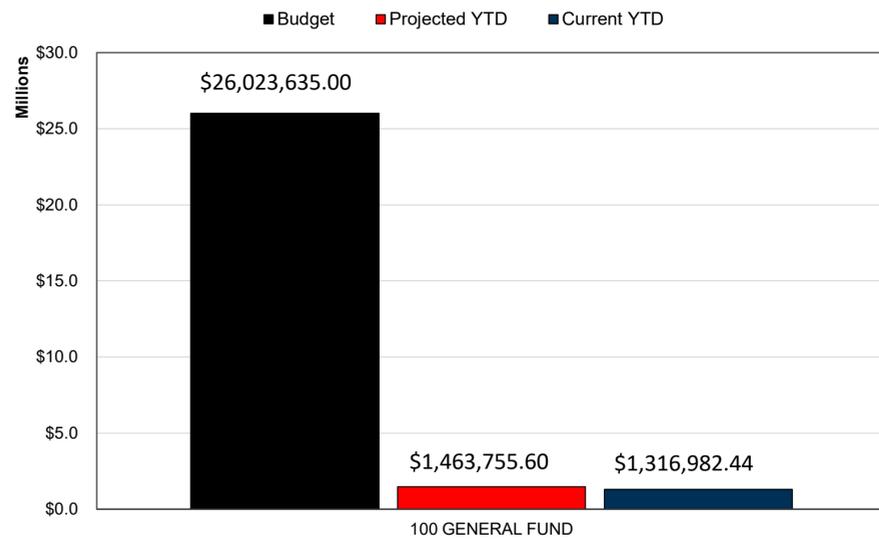
Plant Maint/Operations	\$635,657
Instruction	\$251,146
General Administration	\$94,792
School Leadership	\$81,970
Data Processing Svs	\$45,345
Curr/Instruc Staff Devel	\$43,662
Cocurr/Extracurr Activity	\$37,053
Student Transportation	\$34,184
Guidance/Counsel/Eval Svs	\$30,249
Instructional Leadership	\$17,494

Percent of Total Expenditures YTD **96.55%**

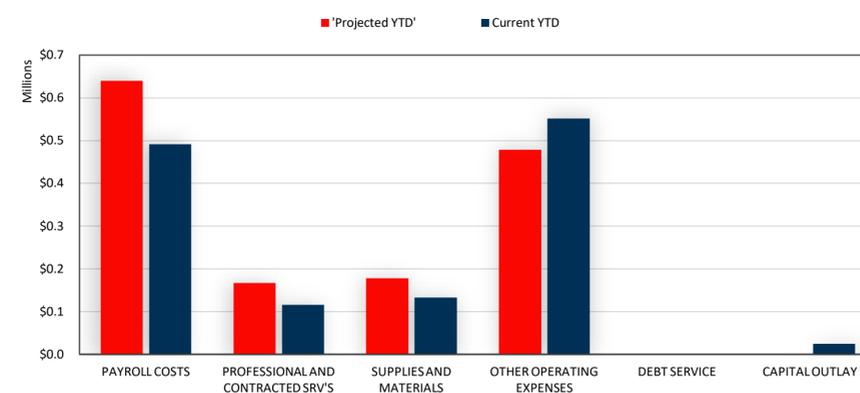
Expenditures by Function



Expenditure Comparison



Expenditures by Object

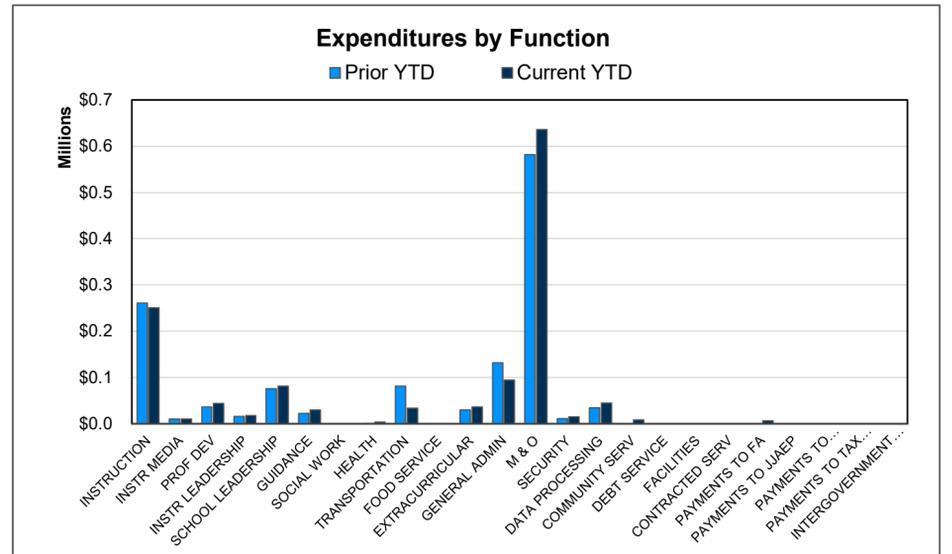
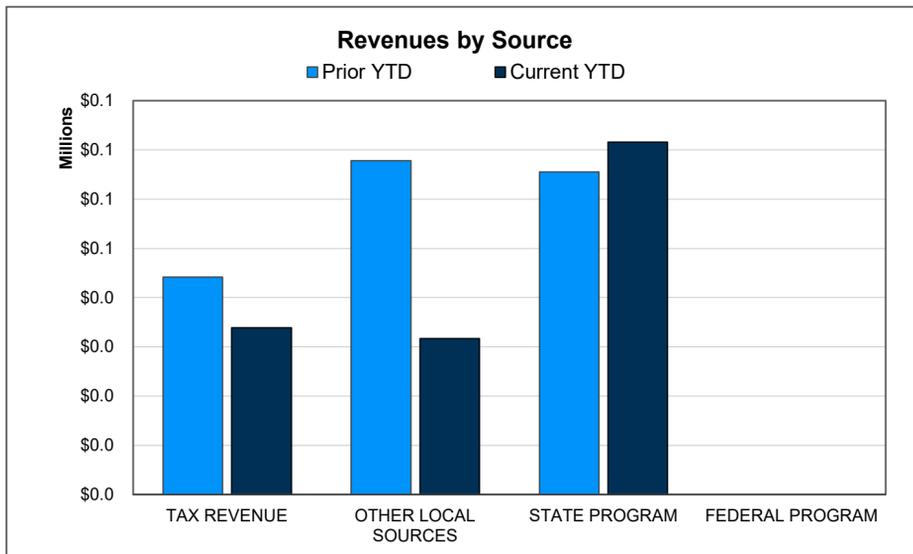


General Fund | Function Financial Summary

For the Period Ending July 31, 2025

GENERAL OPERATING--199

	Prior YTD	Prior Year Actual	YTD % of PY Actual	Current YTD	Annual Budget	YTD % of Budget
REVENUES						
Tax Revenue	\$44,213	\$8,718,589	0.51%	\$33,925	\$9,551,371	0.36%
Other Local Sources	67,805	804,846	8.42%	31,708	720,700	4.40%
State Program	65,494	9,901,486	0.66%	71,577	12,960,967	0.55%
Federal Program	0	0		0	30,000	0.00%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$177,512	\$19,424,921	0.91%	\$137,210	\$23,263,038	0.59%
EXPENDITURES FUNCTIONS						
Instruction	\$261,259	\$10,708,842	2.44%	\$251,146	\$13,178,743	1.91%
Instructional Media	10,053	239,526	4.20%	10,845	273,809	3.96%
Curriculum & Personnel Development	36,912	391,335	9.43%	43,662	406,326	10.75%
Instructional Leadership	15,779	197,690	7.98%	17,494	202,476	8.64%
School Leadership	75,482	1,005,826	7.50%	81,970	1,053,448	7.78%
Guidance & Counseling	22,515	423,404	5.32%	30,249	444,235	6.81%
Social Work Services	0	0		0	0	
Health Services	1,010	224,579	0.45%	3,663	232,874	1.57%
Pupil Transportation	81,705	773,922	10.56%	34,184	1,756,038	1.95%
Food Services	815	9,846	8.28%	767	11,634	6.59%
Extracurricular Activities	30,499	985,159	3.10%	37,053	1,116,520	3.32%
General Administration	131,916	975,552	13.52%	94,792	1,117,417	8.48%
Plant Maintenance & Operations	581,871	7,212,330	8.07%	635,657	3,830,111	16.60%
Security & Monitoring Services	11,644	132,822	8.77%	15,350	391,327	3.92%
Data Processing Services	35,065	429,832	8.16%	45,345	490,182	9.25%
Community Service	0	0		8,130	168,091	4.84%
Debt Service	0	0		0	0	
Facilities Acq. & Construction	0	0		0	10,002	0.00%
Contracted Institutional Services	0	0		0	0	
Payments to Fiscal Agent	0	1,038,249	0.00%	6,675	1,201,401	0.56%
Payments to JJAEP Programs	0	0		0	4,000	0.00%
Payments to Charter Schools	0	0		0	0	
Payments to Tax Increment Fund	0	0		0	0	
Other Intergovernmental Charges	0	100,888	0.00%	0	135,000	0.00%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,296,525	\$24,849,802	5.22%	\$1,316,982	\$26,023,634	5.06%
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	(\$1,119,013)	(\$5,424,881)		(\$1,179,772)	(\$2,760,596)	
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES / (USES)						
Other Financing Sources	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0	
Other Financing Uses	0	0		0	(1)	
TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES / (USES)	\$0	\$0		\$0	(\$1)	
NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE	(\$1,119,013)	(\$5,424,881)		(\$1,179,772)	(\$2,760,597)	
ENDING FUND BALANCE	\$12,562,603	\$8,256,733		\$7,076,961	\$5,496,136	

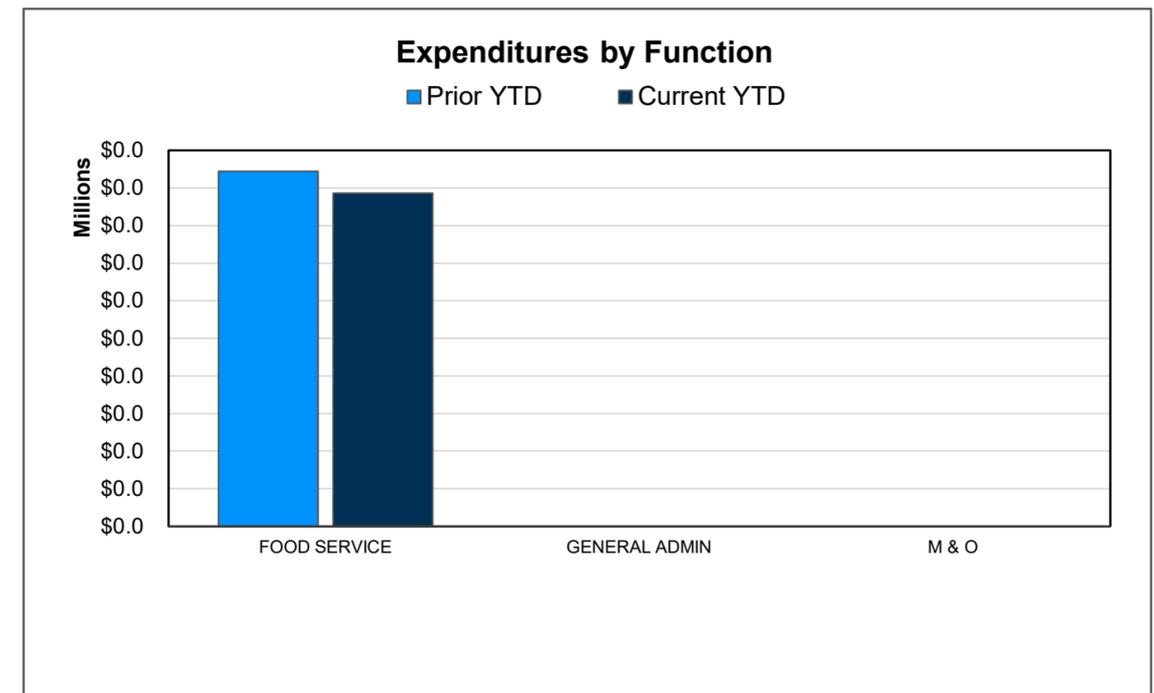
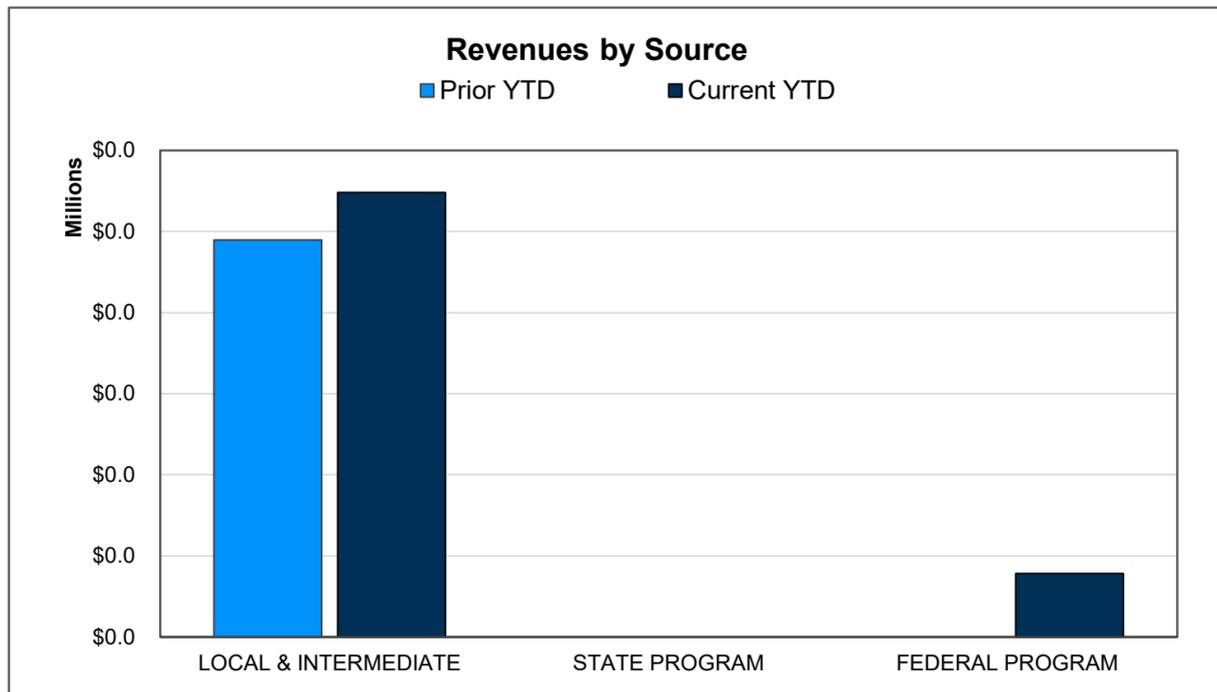


Food Service Fund | Financial Summary

For the Period Ending July 31, 2025

CHILD NUTRITION--240

	Prior YTD	Prior Year Actual	YTD % of PY Actual	Current YTD	Annual Budget	YTD % of Budget
REVENUES						
Local & Intermediate	\$979	\$383,805	0.26%	\$1,096	\$337,003	0.33%
State Program	0	3,264	0.00%	0	1	0.00%
Federal Program	0	511,227	0.00%	157	566,275	0.03%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$979	\$898,296	0.11%	\$1,253	\$903,279	0.14%
EXPENDITURES						
Food Services	\$4,720	\$933,711	0.51%	\$4,431	\$903,279	0.49%
General Administration	0	0		0	0	
Plant Maintenance & Operations	0	0		0	0	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$4,720	\$933,711	0.51%	\$4,431	\$903,279	0.49%
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	(\$3,741)	(\$35,415)		(\$3,178)	\$0	
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES / (USES)						
Other Financing Sources	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0	
Other Financing Uses	0	0		0	0	
TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES / (USES)	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0	
NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE	(\$3,741)	(\$35,415)		(\$3,178)	\$0	
ENDING FUND BALANCE	\$252,196	\$220,522		\$217,343	\$220,522	

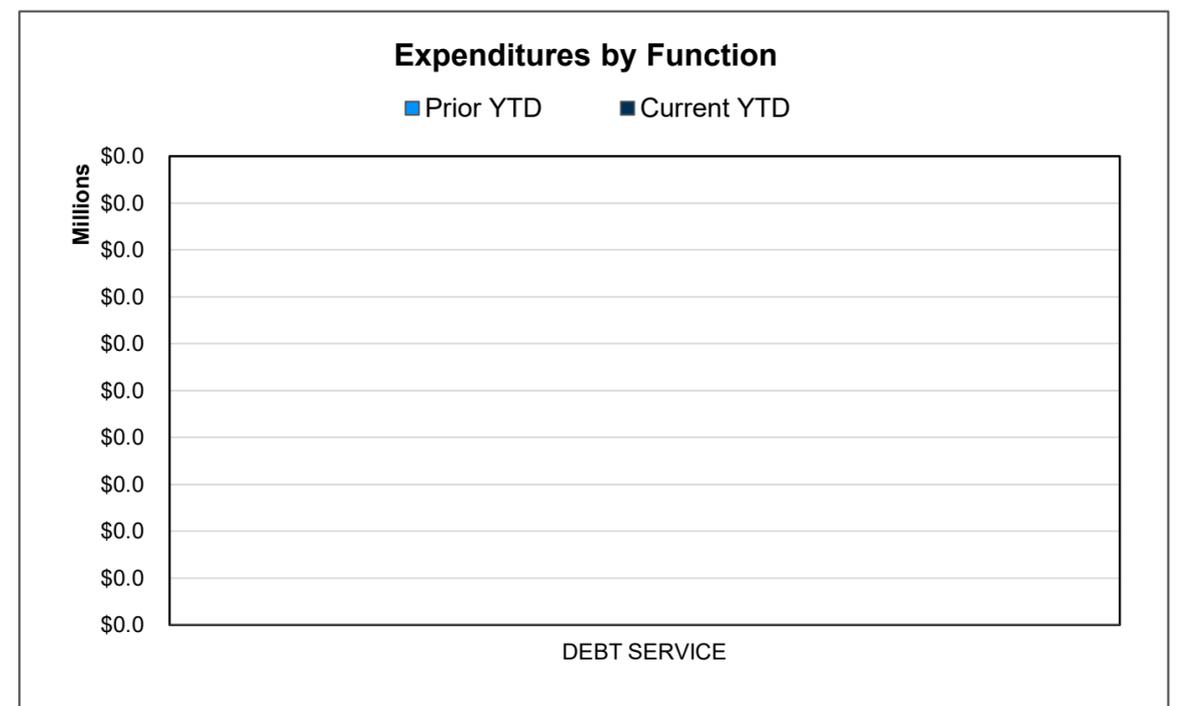
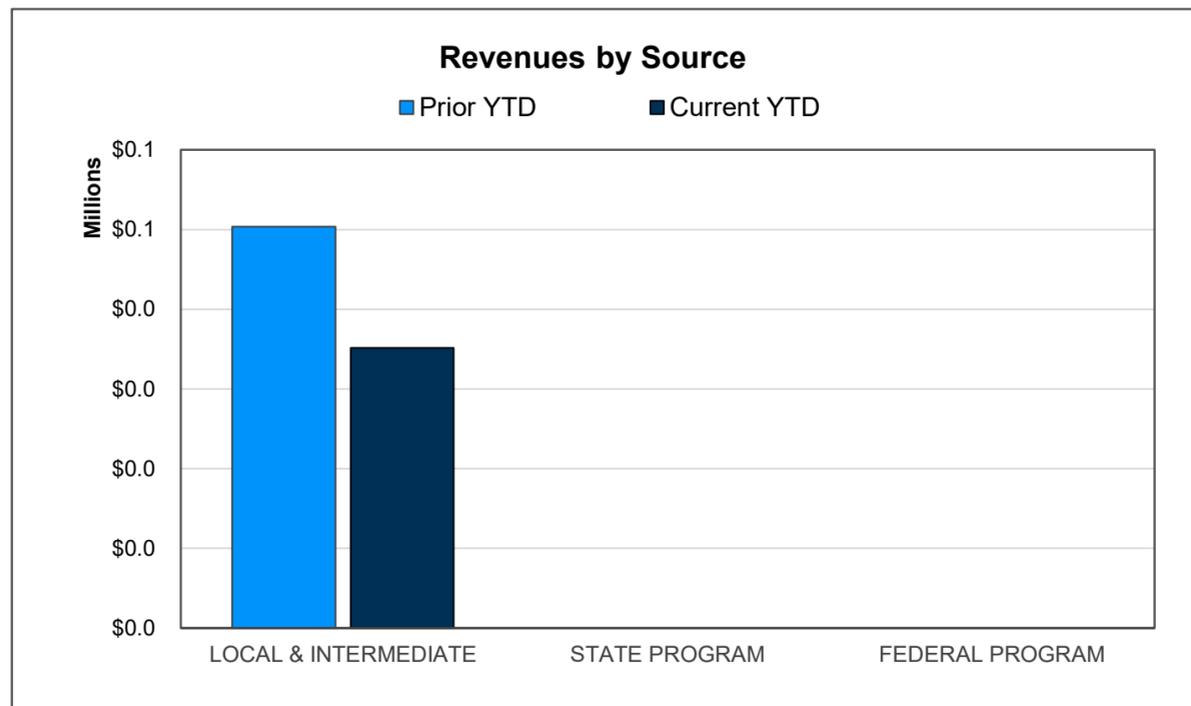


Debt Service Fund | Financial Summary

For the Period Ending July 31, 2025

DEBT SERVICES--599

	Prior YTD	Prior Year Actual	YTD % of PY Actual	Current YTD	Annual Budget	YTD % of Budget
REVENUES						
Local & Intermediate	\$50,355	\$5,159,729	0.98%	\$35,147	\$6,465,280	0.54%
State Program	0	358,293	0.00%	0	1	0.00%
Federal Program	0	0		0	0	
TOTAL REVENUE	\$50,355	\$5,518,022	0.91%	\$35,147	\$6,465,281	0.54%
EXPENDITURES						
Debt Service	\$0	\$6,375,156	0.00%	\$0	\$3,791,313	0.00%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$0	\$6,375,156	0.00%	\$0	\$3,791,313	0.00%
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$50,355	(\$857,134)		\$35,147	\$2,673,968	
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES / (USES)						
Other Financing Sources	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0	
Other Financing Uses	0	0		0	0	
TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES / (USES)	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0	
NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE	\$50,355	(\$857,134)		\$35,147	\$2,673,968	
ENDING FUND BALANCE	\$6,364,114	\$5,456,625		\$5,491,772	\$8,130,593	

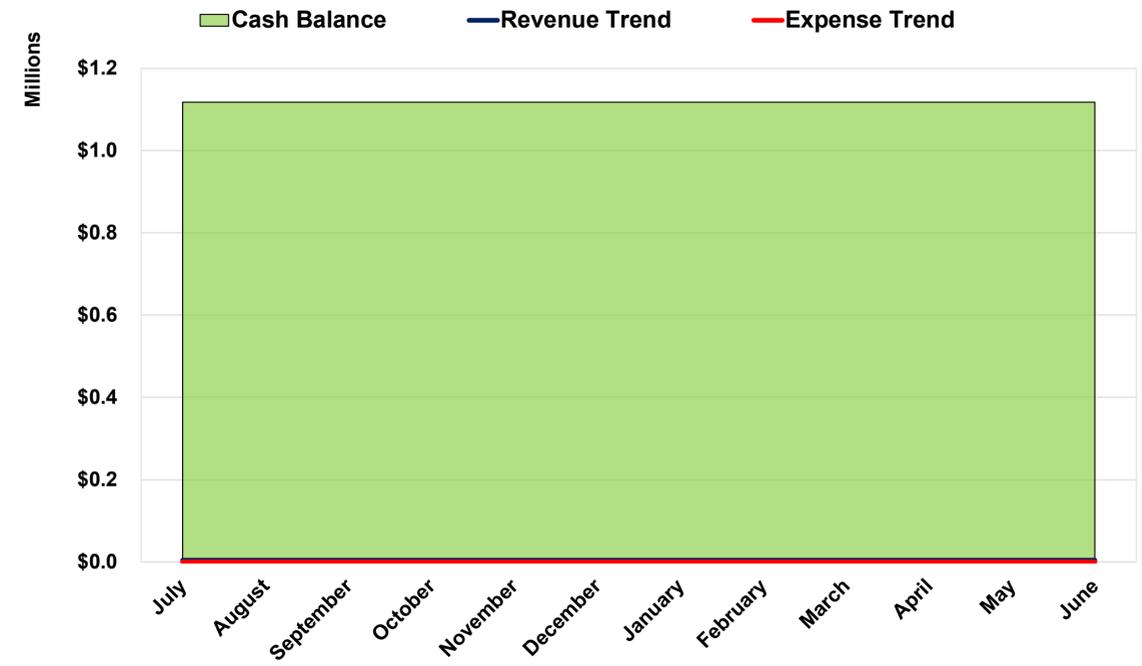
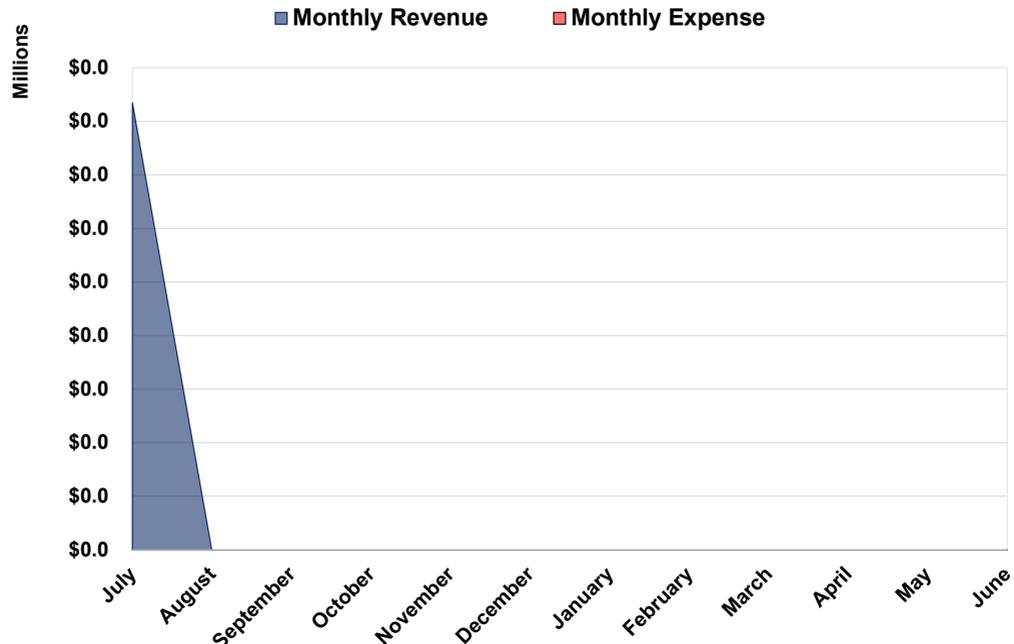


Operating Funds

2026 Cash Flow Projection

CONSTRUCTION--699

	July Actual	August Projected	September Projected	October Projected	November Projected	December Projected	January Projected	February Projected	March Projected	April Projected	May Projected	June Projected	Year to Date Actual	Year End Projected
Beginning Cash Balance	\$1,113,895	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,113,895	\$1,113,895
Revenue														
Local	\$4,172	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,172	\$4,172
State	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$0	0
Federal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$0	0
Other Sources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$0	0
Total Revenue	\$4,172	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,172	\$4,172
Expenditures														
Payroll Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Professional & Contracted Service	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0	0
Supplies & Materials	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0	0
Other Operating	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0	0
Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0	0
Capital Outlay	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0	0
Other Operating	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0	0
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cash Flow Summary														
Revenues (Cash In)	4,172	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,172	4,172
Expenditures (Cash Out)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adjustments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Cash Flow	\$4,172	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,172	\$4,172
Ending Cash Balance	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067	\$1,118,067



Denton County Tax Office

YEAR-TO-DATE SUMMARY PART A

63 - PONDER ISD

Tax Year = 2024 AND Year End Date = 7/31/2025 AND Month Range from 10/1/2024 to 7/31/2025 and Tax Units = PONDER ISD

CURRENT YEAR INFORMATION

Start Value	Start Exemption	Start Taxable	Rate	Calc Start Levy	Actual Start Levy	Start Frozen Loss	Start + Frozen
2,082,279,155	873,591,659	1,208,687,496	1.242300	15,015,524.76	14,158,942.13		15,015,519.96
Adjusted Value	Adjusted Exemption	Adj Taxable	Rate	Calc Adj Levy	Actual Current Levy	Adj Frozen Loss	Act Levy + Act Frozen
2,067,996,748	881,645,279	1,186,351,469	1.242300	14,738,044.30	13,845,503.16	886,913.34	14,732,416.50
StartValue	Net Value Adj	Start Value + net Value Adj		Actual Current Value			
2,082,279,155	(14,282,407)	2,067,996,748		2,067,996,748			
StartExemption	Net Exmp Adj	Start Exemp + Net Exmp Adj		Actual Current Exemption			
873,591,659	8,053,620	881,645,279		881,645,279			

YEAR	START BALANCE	START REFUND DUE	NET START BALANCE	NET MTD ADJ	NET YTD ADJ	YTD PENALTY	YTD INTEREST	YTD COL PEN	OVERPMT REFUND
2003	13,700.16	0.00	13,700.16	0.00	(13,700.16)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2004	26,326.91	0.00	26,326.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2005	33,300.85	0.00	33,300.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2006	32,392.36	0.00	32,392.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2007	17,207.65	0.00	17,207.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2008	4,155.86	0.00	4,155.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2009	2,660.74	0.00	2,660.74	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2010	3,795.46	0.01	3,795.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2011	5,207.28	0.00	5,207.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2012	4,666.19	0.00	4,666.19	0.00	0.00	33.76	236.97	0.00	0.00
2013	7,347.89	0.00	7,347.89	0.00	(44.32)	95.38	574.07	0.00	0.00
2014	6,303.50	0.00	6,303.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	427.05	0.00	0.00
2015	5,314.68	0.00	5,314.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	259.61	0.00	0.00
2016	4,785.48	0.00	4,785.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	252.25	0.00	0.00
2017	9,017.37	0.00	9,017.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	208.33	0.00	0.00
2018	9,448.46	0.00	9,448.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	179.98	0.00	0.00
2019	12,488.64	0.00	12,488.64	0.00	0.00	198.45	1,166.65	573.46	0.00
2020	12,741.87	0.00	12,741.87	0.00	(3,055.26)	24.16	231.91	66.84	0.00
2021	21,664.51	0.00	21,664.51	0.00	(5,975.51)	93.79	371.87	230.48	0.00
2022	36,231.82	0.00	36,231.82	0.00	(12,981.12)	790.83	1,796.13	1,777.14	0.00
2023	150,523.27	(812.75)	149,710.52	(8,830.86)	(115,824.80)	11,506.19	10,726.54	23,210.69	0.00
2024	14,158,942.13	0.00	14,158,942.13	(12,561.44)	(313,438.97)	49,542.69	15,876.77	7,450.79	0.00
TOTAL	14,578,223.08	(812.74)	14,577,410.34	(21,392.30)	(465,020.14)	62,285.25	32,308.13	33,309.40	0.00

YEAR-TO-DATE SUMMARY PART B

63 - PONDER ISD

Tax Year = 2024 AND Year End Date = 7/31/2025 AND Month Range from 10/1/2024 to 7/31/2025 and Tax Units = PONDER ISD

CURRENT YEAR INFORMATION

Start Value	Start Exemption	Start Taxable	Rate	Calc Start Levy	Actual Start Levy	Start Frozen Loss	Start + Frozen
2,082,279,155	873,591,659	1,208,687,496	1.242300	15,015,524.76	14,158,942.13		15,015,519.96
Adjusted Value	Adjusted Exemption	Adj Taxable	Rate	Calc Adj Levy	Actual Current Levy	Adj Frozen Loss	Act Levy + Act Frozen
2,067,996,748	881,645,279	1,186,351,469	1.242300	14,738,044.30	13,845,503.16	886,913.34	14,732,416.50
StartValue	Net Value Adj	Start Value + net Value Adj			Actual Current Value		
2,082,279,155	(14,282,407)	2,067,996,748			2,067,996,748		
StartExemption	Net Exmp Adj	Start Exemp + Net Exmp Adj			Actual Current Exemption		
873,591,659	8,053,620	881,645,279			881,645,279		

YEAR	YTD LEVY PAID	YTD REFUND PAID	YTD DISCOUNT	NET YTD LEVY PAID	CALC BALANCE	PAYMENTS PENDING	REFUNDS PENDING	ACTUAL BALANCE	DIFF
2003	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2004	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	26,326.91	0.00	0.00	26,326.91	0.00
2005	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	33,300.85	0.00	0.00	33,300.85	0.00
2006	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	32,392.36	0.00	0.00	32,392.36	0.00
2007	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	17,207.65	0.00	0.00	17,207.65	0.00
2008	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,155.86	0.00	0.00	4,155.86	0.00
2009	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,660.74	0.00	0.00	2,660.74	0.00
2010	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,795.47	0.00	0.00	3,795.47	0.00
2011	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,207.28	0.00	0.00	5,207.28	0.00
2012	281.34	0.00	0.00	281.34	4,384.85	0.00	0.00	4,384.85	0.00
2013	794.80	0.00	0.00	794.80	6,508.77	0.00	0.00	6,508.77	0.00
2014	705.82	0.00	0.00	705.82	5,597.68	0.00	0.00	5,597.68	0.00
2015	494.46	0.00	0.00	494.46	4,820.22	0.00	0.00	4,820.22	0.00
2016	567.07	0.00	0.00	567.07	4,218.41	0.00	0.00	4,218.41	0.00
2017	567.07	0.00	0.00	567.07	8,450.30	0.00	0.00	8,450.30	0.00
2018	567.07	0.00	0.00	567.07	8,881.39	0.00	0.00	8,881.39	0.00
2019	2,220.91	0.00	0.00	2,220.91	10,267.73	0.00	0.00	10,267.73	0.00
2020	4,057.12	(3,055.26)	0.00	1,001.86	8,684.75	0.00	0.00	8,684.75	0.00
2021	4,539.08	(6,003.33)	0.00	-1,464.25	17,153.25	0.00	0.00	17,153.25	0.00
2022	11,335.93	(30,017.38)	0.00	-18,681.45	41,932.15	151.52	0.00	41,780.63	0.00
2023	108,427.34	(136,400.63)	0.00	-27,973.29	61,859.01	126.04	0.00	61,732.97	0.00
2024	13,733,261.10	(137,210.04)	0.00	13,596,051.06	249,452.10	6,912.28	0.00	242,539.82	0.00
TOTAL	13,867,819.11	(312,686.64)	0.00	13,555,132.47	557,257.73	7,189.84	0.00	550,067.89	0.00

Denton County Tax Office

YEAR-TO-DATE SUMMARY PART C

63 - PONDER ISD

Tax Year = 2024 AND Year End Date = 7/31/2025 AND Month Range from 10/1/2024 to 7/31/2025 and Tax Units = PONDER ISD

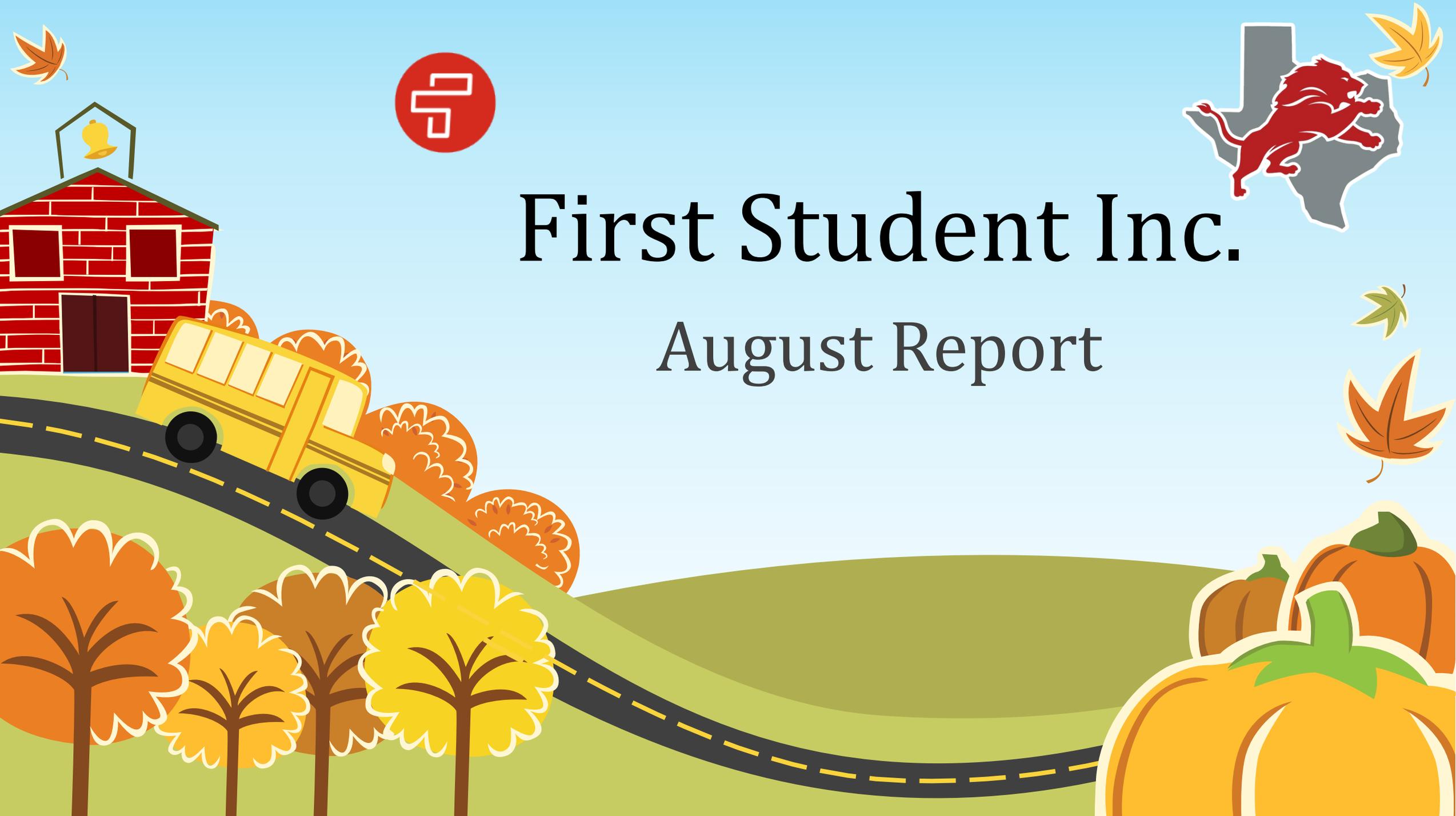
CURRENT YEAR INFORMATION

Start Value	Start Exemption	Start Taxable	Rate	Calc Start Levy	Actual Start Levy	Start Frozen Loss	Start + Frozen
2,082,279,155	873,591,659	1,208,687,496	1.242300	15,015,524.76	14,158,942.13		15,015,519.96
Adjusted Value	Adjusted Exemption	Adj Taxable	Rate	Calc Adj Levy	Actual Current Levy	Adj Frozen Loss	Act Levy + Act Frozen
2,067,996,748	881,645,279	1,186,351,469	1.242300	14,738,044.30	13,845,503.16	886,913.34	14,732,416.50
StartValue	Net Value Adj	Start Value + net Value Adj			Actual Current Value		
2,082,279,155	(14,282,407)	2,067,996,748			2,067,996,748		
StartExemption	Net Exmp Adj	Start Exemp + Net Exmp Adj			Actual Current Exemption		
873,591,659	8,053,620	881,645,279			881,645,279		

YEAR	NET START BALANCE	NET MTD ADJ	NET YTD ADJ	NET MTD PAID	NET YTD PAID	CALC BALANCE	REFUNDS DUE	COL %
2003	13,700.16	0.00	(13,700.16)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2004	26,326.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	26,326.91	0.00	0.00
2005	33,300.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	33,300.85	0.00	0.00
2006	32,392.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	32,392.36	0.00	0.00
2007	17,207.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	17,207.65	0.00	0.00
2008	4,155.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,155.86	0.00	0.00
2009	2,660.74	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,660.74	0.00	0.00
2010	3,795.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,795.47	0.01	0.00
2011	5,207.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,207.28	0.00	0.00
2012	4,666.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	281.34	4,384.85	0.00	6.02
2013	7,347.89	0.00	(44.32)	0.00	794.80	6,508.77	0.00	10.88
2014	6,303.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	705.82	5,597.68	0.00	11.19
2015	5,314.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	494.46	4,820.22	0.00	9.30
2016	4,785.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	567.07	4,218.41	0.00	11.84
2017	9,017.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	567.07	8,450.30	0.00	6.28
2018	9,448.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	567.07	8,881.39	0.00	6.00
2019	12,488.64	0.00	0.00	1.02	2,220.91	10,267.73	0.00	17.78
2020	12,741.87	0.00	(3,055.26)	201.31	1,001.86	8,684.75	0.00	10.34
2021	21,664.51	0.00	(5,975.51)	0.00	(1,464.25)	17,153.25	0.00	0.00
2022	36,231.82	0.00	(12,981.12)	1,779.64	(18,681.45)	41,932.15	0.00	0.00
2023	149,710.52	(8,830.86)	(115,824.80)	(4,246.86)	(27,973.29)	61,859.01	(1,651.95)	0.00
2024	14,158,942.13	(12,561.44)	(313,438.97)	37,107.54	13,596,051.06	249,452.10	(1,654.14)	98.19
TOTAL	14,577,410.34	(21,392.30)	(465,020.14)	34,842.65	13,555,132.47	557,257.73	(3,306.08)	

Ponder ISD Utility Usage and Cost for Fiscal Year Ending 6/30/2025

2024-2025 School Fiscal Year													
Utility	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	Avg. Total
Electricity													
Kilo Hours	497,977	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41,498.08
Cost \$	\$44,650	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	3,720.86
Unit cost \$	\$0.090												0.09
Gas													
MCF	831	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	69.25
Cost \$	\$1,213	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	101.05
Unit cost \$	\$1.459												1.46
Water													
Gallons	69,080	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,756.67
Cost \$	\$2,693	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	224.39
Unit cost \$	\$0.039												0.04
Total \$	\$48,556	\$0	48,555.64										
2024-25 Totals	\$53,767	\$59,166	\$69,988	\$61,555	\$65,201	\$52,506	\$47,573	\$61,172	\$57,031	\$45,927	\$44,093	\$47,752	\$665,731
2023-24 Totals	\$24,616	\$35,595	\$63,000	\$52,228	\$43,401	\$47,253	\$53,211	\$48,108	\$86,166	\$43,653	\$56,845	\$56,159	\$610,234
2022-23 Totals	\$31,051	\$36,568	\$39,258	\$34,655	\$34,137	\$36,156	\$33,481	\$33,886	\$27,483	\$26,713	\$26,286	\$25,627	\$385,303
2021-22 Totals	\$29,954	\$33,700	\$36,865	\$39,014	\$28,572	\$29,677	\$30,877	\$31,408	\$30,258	\$25,660	\$29,278	\$30,972	\$376,235
2020-21 Totals	\$36,756	\$30,900	\$28,735	\$30,164	\$30,034	\$30,600	\$29,281	\$24,007	\$25,255	\$21,671	\$29,954	\$33,700	\$351,057
2019-20 Totals	\$40,463	\$39,386	\$27,339	\$29,344	\$24,256	\$26,718	\$22,382	\$16,151	\$18,190	\$22,232	\$23,836	\$29,820	\$320,117
2018-19 Totals	\$35,917	\$32,699	\$27,620	\$28,471	\$25,019	\$28,502	\$24,932	\$22,335	\$23,581	\$22,378	\$22,449	\$11,362	\$305,267
2017-18 Totals	\$34,152	\$32,564	\$28,816	\$29,774	\$29,626	\$30,206	\$24,967	\$23,224	\$23,700	\$30,886	\$27,495	\$33,442	\$348,854
2016-17 Totals	\$23,869	\$35,295	\$30,739	\$32,159	\$28,493	\$23,807	\$24,310	\$23,172	\$24,490	\$24,348	\$19,673	\$27,088	\$317,444



First Student Inc.

August Report



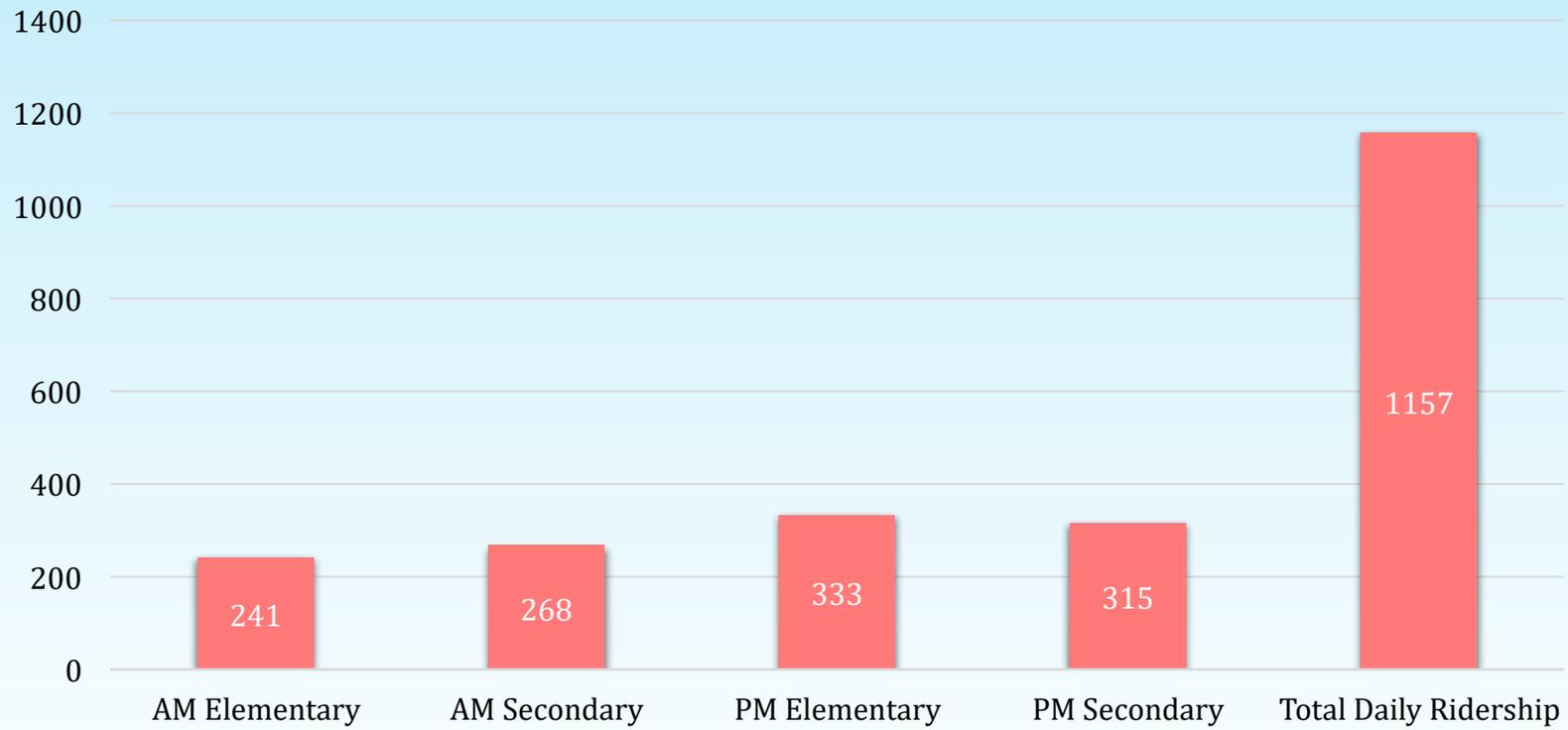
August 2025 Report

- Current Ridership
- Current number of Routes
- Current Staffing
- Driver Applicant Pool
- Training completed this Summer
- Parent concerns





Daily Ridership





Current Number of Routes

First Student is currently operating 13 routes for Ponder ISD

- 9 General Education routes with Ponder ISD owned School Buses
- 2 General Education routes with First Student owned School Buses
- 2 Special Education routes with Ponder ISD owned School Buses





Current Employees

First Student currently operates at Ponder ISD with a total of 20 employees

- 10 General Education Drivers
- 2 half day AM/PM General Education Drivers
- 2 Special Education Drivers
- 1 Cover Driver
- 2 Trainers
- 1 Location Manager
- 1 Technician in Charge
- 1 Diesel Technician



First Student Applicant pool for Ponder ISD



- Since mid April, FS received 198 applications for employment
- 30 applications since July 24th
- Averaging 7.5 applications per week
- Just under 50% of our applicants since July 24th already have their Commercial Driver's License

Week ending	Total Applicants	CDL Credentialed Drivers
August 22	5	3
August 15	6	3
August 8	12	5
August 1	7	3





SUMMER TRAINING PROGRAM

Driver Training

- 76 hours of Virtual Classroom Training
- 114 hours of Behind the Wheel Training
- Train the Trainer Training for our 2 Trainers – 180 Hours

Coach/Ponder ISD Employee Training

- 72 hours of Virtual Classroom Training
- 81 hours of Behind the Wheel Training





Parent Concerns

- First Student has been responsive to parent concerns
- Bus Stops relocated for safety
- General questions or concerns answered and/or addressed



AUGUST 25, 2025

BOARD VISIONING WORKSHOP

PONDER ISD | BOND PLANNING COMMITTEE



VLK

PROCESS OVERVIEW



VLK

PROCESS OVERVIEW

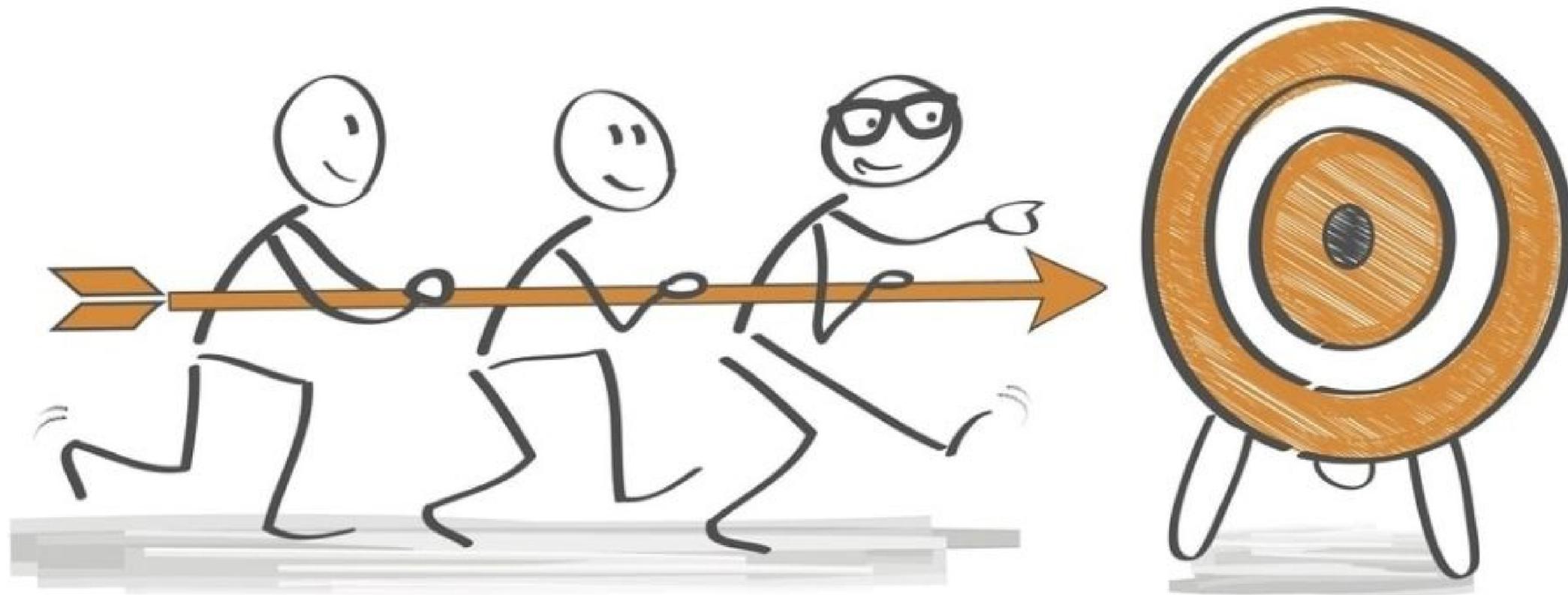
- **Facilitator role as third party advocate for committee**
- **Meeting design with presentations, table discussion, questions by committee**
- **Facilitator availability to committee**
- **Prep of all meeting presentations and materials sent to district for printing**
- **Meeting debrief following the meeting with table facilitators and district officials**



VLK

END GAME

For the committee to reach **consensus & commitment** regarding the vision of Ponder ISD facilities



VLK

MEETING OVERVIEW

Meeting #1

Process, timeline, vision, end goal
Committee Charge from Board of Trustees
Gradients of Decision Making Model
Review of projects since prior bond
School Finance 101

Meeting #2

Demographic Report
Facility Needs Assessment

Meeting #3

Facility Tours

Meeting #4

Project Priority Presentation
Priority Worksheet

Meeting #5

Financial Advisor Presentation
Priority Worksheet and Table Vote

Meeting #6

Bond Package Development with CoVoice
SWOT Analysis regarding potential bond



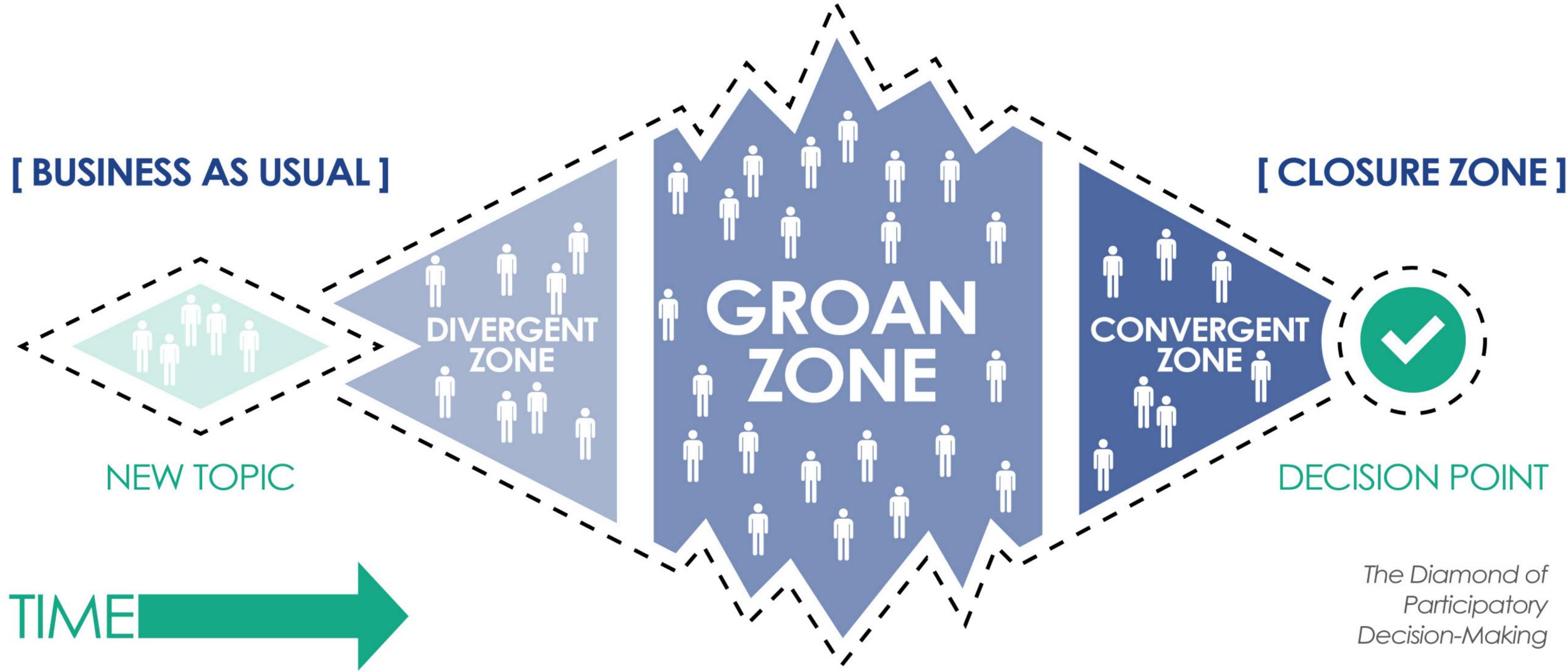
VLK

CONSENSUS & GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT

ENDORSEMENT <i>"I like it."</i>	ENDORSEMENT WITH A MINOR POINT OF CONTENTION <i>"Basically, I like it."</i>	AGREEMENT WITH RESERVATIONS <i>"I can live with it."</i>	ABSTAIN <i>"I have no opinion."</i>	STAND ASIDE <i>"I don't like this, but I don't want to hold up the group."</i>	FORMAL DISAGREEMENT, BUT WILLING TO GO WITH THE MAJORITY <i>"I want my disagreement noted in writing, but I'll support the decision."</i>	FORMAL DISAGREEMENT, WITH REQUEST TO BE ABSOLVED OF RESPONSIBILITY <i>"I don't want to stop anyone else, but I don't want to be involved in implementing it."</i>	BLOCK <i>"I veto this proposal."</i>
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This scale makes it easier for participants to be honest. Using it, members can register less-than-whole-hearted support without fearing that their statement will be interpreted as a veto.

DYNAMICS OF GROUP DECISION-MAKING



VLK

COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILE

- **Parents**
- **Students**
- **Business Leaders**
- **Clergy**
- **Educators**
- **Volunteers**
- **Community Members**

Each table should contain a smattering of the list above. No one table should be heavy staff or heavy community, but should be a good mix. One student at each table is very important as they can be a guiding voice for the groups.



VLK

COMMITTEE CHARGE EXAMPLE

The Ponder ISD Bond Planning Committee recommendation will:

- Consider the needs of all district's students,
- Represent the priorities, expectations, and values of the entire community,
- Use facts and data to make informed decisions,
- Strive for equity of facilities, defined as not being the same, but rather as supporting common educational goals of the district, including safety and security,
- Understand the district's finances to develop short and long term goals that are fiscally sound.



VLK

THANK YOU!



VLK





PONDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

400 W. Bailey | Ponder, TX 76259 | (940) 479-8200 | www.ponderisd.net | Fax: (940) 479-8209

PONDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT ORDINANCE TO SET TAX RATE

On this date, we, the Board of Trustees of the Ponder Independent School District, hereby levy or set the tax rate on \$100 valuation for the District for the tax year 2025 (2025-26 Fiscal Year) at a total tax rate of **\$1.2766**, to be assessed and collected by the duly specified assessor and collector as follows:

- **\$0.7766** for the purpose of maintenance and operation, and
- **\$0.5000** for the purpose of payment of principal and interest on debts;

Such taxes are to be assessed and collected by the tax officials designated by the District.

THIS TAX RATE WILL RAISE MORE TAXES FOR MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS THAN LAST YEAR'S TAX RATE.

THE TAX RATE WILL EFFECTIVELY BE INCREASE (DECREASED) BY 2.76% PERCENT AND WILL RAISE (LOWER) TAXES FOR MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS ON A \$100,000 HOME BY APPROXIMATELY –(\$60.02).

IN CERTIFICATION THEREOF:

APPROVED, this the 25th day of August, 2025, by the Ponder ISD Board of Trustees.

Bruce Laney, Board President

Attest: Vangee Deussen, Board Secretary

Chance Allen, Board Member

Craig Brown, Board Member

Sara Holloway-Hunton, Board Member

Alicia Lujan, Board Member

Ben Angeley, Board Member

Ponder ISD Code of Conduct



2025-2026

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Ponder ISD Student Code of Conduct
2025-26 School Year

Student Code of Conduct

Accessibility

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact *Ponder Elementary* (940) 479-8230, *Ponder Jr. High* (940) 479-8220, *Ponder High School* (940) 479-8210.

Purpose

The Student Code of Conduct (“Code of Conduct”), as required by Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code, provides methods and options for managing student behavior, preventing and intervening in student discipline problems, and imposing discipline.

The law requires the district to define misconduct that may—or must—result in a range of specific disciplinary consequences, including removal from a regular classroom or campus, out-of-school suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), placement in a juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP), or expulsion from school.

This Code of Conduct has been adopted by the *Ponder ISD* board of trustees and developed with the advice of the district-level planning and decision-making committee. It provides information to parents and students regarding standards of conduct, consequences of misconduct, and procedures for administering discipline. This Code of Conduct remains in effect during summer school and at all school-related events and activities outside the school year until the board adopts an updated version for the next school year.

In accordance with state law, the Code of Conduct shall be posted at each school campus or shall be available for review at the campus principal’s office. Additionally, the Code of Conduct shall be available at the campus behavior coordinator’s office and posted on the district’s website. Parents shall be notified of any conduct violation that may result in a student being suspended, placed in a DAEP or JJAEP, expelled, or taken into custody by a law enforcement officer under Chapter 37 of the Education Code.

Because the Code of Conduct is adopted by the district’s board of trustees, it has the force of policy. In the event of a conflict between the Code of Conduct and the Student Handbook, the Code of Conduct shall prevail.

Please note: The discipline of students with disabilities who are eligible for services under federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) is subject to the provisions of those laws.

School District Authority and Jurisdiction

School rules and the district's authority to administer discipline apply whenever the interest of the district is involved, on or off school grounds, in conjunction with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities.

The district has disciplinary authority over a student:

- During the regular school day;
- While the student is traveling on district transportation;
- At any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
- For any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location;
- When retaliation against a school employee, board member, or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
- When a student engages in cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832;
- When criminal mischief is committed on or off school property or at a school-related event;
- For certain offenses committed within 300 feet of school property as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line;
- For certain offenses committed while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of another district in Texas;
- When the student commits a felony, as provided by Education Code 37.006 or 37.0081; and
- When the student is required to register as a sex offender.

Campus Behavior Coordinator

As required by law, a single person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator (CBC). The designated person may be the principal, or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. Additional staff members may assist the CBC in the performance of the CBC's duties, provided that the CBC personally verifies that all aspects of Chapter 37, Subchapter A are appropriately implemented. The CBC is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline. The CBC shall monitor disciplinary referrals and report the following behavior to the campus's threat assessment and safe and supportive school team:

- Conduct that contains the elements of the offense of terroristic threat under Penal Code 22.07;
- Conduct that contains the elements of the offense of unlawfully carrying weapons under Penal Code 46.02;
- Conduct that contains the elements of the offense of exhibiting, using, or threatening to exhibit or use a firearm under Education Code 37.125; and
- Any concerning student behaviors or behavioral trends that may pose a serious risk of violence to the student or others.

Contact information may be found on the [Ponder ISD website](#) and in the [Student Handbook](#).

Threat Assessment and Safe and Supportive School Team

The CBC or other appropriate administrator will work closely with the campus threat assessment and safe and supportive school team to implement the district's threat assessment policy and procedures, as required by law, and shall take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Searches

District officials may conduct searches of students, their belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with state and federal law and district policy. Searches of students shall be conducted in a reasonable and nondiscriminatory manner. Refer to the district's policies at FNF(LEGAL) and FNF(LOCAL) for more information regarding investigations and searches.

The district has the right to search a vehicle driven to school by a student and parked on school property whenever there is reasonable suspicion to believe it contains articles or materials prohibited by the district.

Desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the district and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. District property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice.

Reporting Crimes

The principal or CBC and other school administrators as appropriate shall report crimes as required by law and shall call local law enforcement when an administrator suspects that a crime has been committed on campus.

Security Personnel

The board will utilize district-approved Guardians (locally referred to as "Defenders") as security personnel to ensure the security and protection of students, staff, and property. In accordance with law, the board has coordinated with the CBC and other district employees to ensure appropriate law enforcement duties are assigned to these persons. Provisions addressing the various types of security personnel can be found in the CKE policy series.

The law enforcement duties of district security personnel ("Defenders") will be to serve as voluntary, trained immediate responders in the event of any active threat emergencies, until the arrival of first responders such as licensed law enforcement officers. A select number of Defenders will receive additional training and will serve as designated Campus Armed Security Officers (ASOs) as required by TEC §37.0814.

“Parent” Defined

Throughout the Code of Conduct and related discipline policies, the term “parent” includes a parent, legal guardian, or other person having lawful control of the child.

Participating in Graduation Activities

The district has the right to limit a student's participation in graduation activities for violating the district's Code of Conduct.

Participation might include a speaking role, as established by district policy and procedures.

Students eligible to give the opening and closing remarks at graduation shall be notified by the campus principal. Notwithstanding any other eligibility requirements, in order to be considered

eligible, a student shall not have engaged in any misconduct that resulted in an out-of-school suspension, removal to a DAEP, or expulsion during the semester immediately preceding graduation.

The valedictorian and salutatorian may also have speaking roles at graduation. No student shall be eligible to have such a speaking role if he or she engaged in any misconduct that resulted in an out-of-school suspension, removal to a DAEP, or expulsion during the semester immediately preceding graduation.

Unauthorized Persons

In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator, SRO, or district police officer shall have the authority to refuse entry to or eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and:

- The person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person; or
- The person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and persists in the behavior after being given a verbal warning that the behavior is inappropriate and may result in refusal of entry or ejection.

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with policies FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL), as appropriate. However, the timelines for the district's grievance procedures shall be adjusted as necessary to permit the person to address the board in person within 90 calendar days, unless the complaint is resolved before a board hearing.

See **DAEP—Restrictions During Placement** on page for information regarding a student assigned to DAEP at the time of graduation.

Standards for Student Conduct

Each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy, even when others do not.
- Behave in a responsible manner.
- Exercise self-discipline.
- Attend all classes regularly and on time.
- Bring appropriate materials and assignments to class.
- Meet district and campus standards of grooming and dress.
- Obey all campus and classroom rules.
- Respect the rights and privileges of students, teachers, and other district staff and volunteers.
- Respect the property of others, including district property and facilities.
- Cooperate with and assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Student Code of Conduct.

General Conduct Violations

The categories of conduct below are prohibited at school, in vehicles owned or operated by the district, and at all school-related activities, but the list does not include the most severe offenses. In the subsequent sections on **Out-of-School Suspension** on page, **DAEP Placement** on page, **Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page, and **Expulsion** on page, those offenses that require or permit specific consequences are listed. Any offense, however, may be severe enough to result in **Removal from the Regular Educational Setting** as detailed on page 20.

Disregard for Authority

Students shall not:

- Fail to comply with directives given by school personnel.
- Leave school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
- Disobey rules for conduct in district vehicles.
- Refuse to accept discipline or consequence assigned by a teacher or principal.

Mistreatment of Others

Students shall not:

- Use profanity or vulgar language or make obscene gestures.
- Fight or scuffle. (For assault, see **DAEP—Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page .)
- Threaten a district student, employee, or volunteer, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Engage in any behavior that violates the Student Code of Conduct and is motivated by antisemitism. [See Glossary]
- Engage in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or making hit lists. (See **glossary** for all four terms.)
- Release or threaten to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
- Engage in sexual or gender-based harassment or sexual abuse, whether by word, gesture, or any other conduct directed toward another person, including a district student, employee, board member, or volunteer.
- Engage in conduct that constitutes dating violence. (See **glossary**.)
- Engage in inappropriate or indecent exposure of private body parts.
- Participate in hazing. (See **glossary**.)
- Coerce an individual to act through the use or threat of force.
- Commit extortion or blackmail.
- Engage in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual conduct directed toward another person, including a district student, employee, or volunteer.

- Record the voice or image of another without the prior consent of the individual being recorded or in any way that disrupts the educational environment or invades the privacy of others.

Property Offenses

Students shall not:

- Damage or vandalize property owned by others. (For felony criminal mischief, see **DAEP—Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page .)
- Deface or damage school property, including textbooks, technology and electronic resources, lockers, furniture, and other equipment, with graffiti or by other means.
- Steal from students, staff, or the school.
- Commit or assist in a robbery or theft, even if it does not constitute a felony according to the Penal Code. (For felony robbery, aggravated robbery, and theft, see **DAEP— Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page .)
- Enter, without authorization, district facilities that are not open for operations.

Possession of Prohibited Items

Students shall not possess or use:

- Fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device;
- A razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person;
- A “look-alike” weapon that is intended to be used as a weapon or could reasonably be perceived as a weapon;
- An air gun or BB gun;
- Ammunition;
- A hand instrument designed to cut or stab another by being thrown;
- A firearm silencer or suppressor;
- *A location-restricted knife;
- *A club;
- *A firearm;
- A stun gun;
- Knuckles;
- A pocketknife or any other small knife;
- Mace or pepper spray;
- Pornographic material;
- Tobacco products (including nicotine pouches), cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and any component, part, or accessory for an e-cigarette device;
- Matches or a lighter;
- A laser pointer, unless it is for an approved use; or

- Any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the principal or designee determines that a danger exists.

*See Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses for weapons and firearms. In many circumstances, possession of these items is punishable by mandatory expulsion under federal or state law.

Possession of Telecommunications or Other Electronic Devices

Students shall not:

- Use a personal communication device, including a cell phone, or other electronic device on school property during the school day and shall store the device in accordance with the method of storage established by the district. [See Glossary]
- The district may authorize the use of a personal communication device for the following reasons:
 - o To implement an individualized education program (IEP) or for a plan created under Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C Section 794) or a similar program or plan;
 - o With documented need based on a directive from a qualified physician; or
 - o To comply with a health or safety requirement imposed by law or as part of the district's safety protocols.

Inappropriate use of a personal communication device during the school day will result in disciplinary action in accordance with this Code of Conduct.

Illegal, Prescription, and Over-the-Counter Drugs

Students shall not:

- Possess, use, give, or sell alcohol or an illegal drug. (Also see **DAEP Placement** on page and **Expulsion** on page for mandatory and permissive consequences under state law.)
- Possess or sell seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount.
- Possess, use, give, or sell paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance. (See **glossary** for "paraphernalia.")
- Possess, use, abuse, or sell look-alike drugs or attempt to pass items off as drugs or contraband.
- Abuse the student's own prescription drug, give a prescription drug to another student, or possess or be under the influence of another person's prescription drug on school property or at a school-related event. (See **glossary** for "abuse.")
- Abuse over-the-counter drugs. (See **glossary** for "abuse.")
- Be under the influence of prescription or over-the-counter drugs that cause impairment to body or mind. (See **glossary** for "under the influence.")
- Have or take prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs at school other than as provided by district policy.

Misuse of Technology Resources and the Internet

Students shall not:

- Violate policies, rules, or agreements signed by the student or the student's parent regarding the use of technology resources.
- Attempt to access or circumvent passwords or other security-related information of the district, students, or employees or upload or create computer viruses, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Attempt to alter, destroy, or disable district technology resources including, but not limited to, computers and related equipment, district data, the data of others, or other networks connected to the district's system, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Use the internet or other electronic communications to threaten or harass district students, employees, board members, or volunteers, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.
- Send, post, deliver, or possess electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal, including cyberbullying and "sexting," either on or off school property, if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.
- Use the internet or other electronic communication to engage in or encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.

Safety Transgressions

Students shall not:

- Possess published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety.
- Engage in verbal (oral or written) exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property.
- Make false accusations or perpetrate hoaxes regarding school safety.
- Engage in any conduct that school officials might reasonably believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
- Throw objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage.
- Discharge a fire extinguisher without valid cause.

Miscellaneous Offenses

Students shall not:

- Violate dress and grooming standards as communicated in the Student Handbook.
- Engage in academic dishonesty, which includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination.
- Gamble.
- Falsify records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Engage in actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
- Repeatedly violate other communicated campus or classroom standards of conduct.

The district may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Code of Conduct. These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Code of Conduct.

Discipline Management Techniques

Discipline shall be designed to improve conduct and encourage students to be responsible members of the school community. Disciplinary action shall draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of discipline management techniques, including restorative practices. Discipline shall be based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and statutory requirements.

First-Time Offense of Possession or Use of Nicotine Delivery Product or E-Cigarette

An appropriate administrator may place a student in a disciplinary alternative education program for the first-time offense of possession or use of a nicotine delivery product or e-cigarette, as defined by [Section 161.081, Health and Safety Code](#).

If a student who possesses or uses an e-cigarette is not placed in a disciplinary alternative education program for the first-time offense under [Education Code 37.008](#), the student shall be placed in in-school suspension for a period of at least 10 school days.

Students with Disabilities

The discipline of students with disabilities is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Code of Conduct. In the event of any conflict, the district shall comply with federal law. For more information regarding discipline of students with disabilities, see policy FOF(LEGAL).

In accordance with the [Education Code](#), a student who receives special education services may not be disciplined for conduct meeting the definition of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or making hit lists (see **glossary**) until an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting has been held to review the conduct.

In deciding whether to order suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the district shall take into consideration a disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct.

Techniques

The following discipline management techniques may be used alone, in combination, or as part of progressive interventions for behavior prohibited by the Code of Conduct or by campus or classroom rules:

- Verbal correction, oral or written.
- Cooling-off time or a brief "time-out" period, in accordance with law.
- Seating changes within the classroom or vehicles owned or operated by the district.
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
- Rewards or demerits.
- Behavioral contracts.
- Counseling by teachers, school counselors, or administrative personnel.
- Parent-teacher conferences.

- Behavior coaching.
- Anger management classes.
- Mediation (victim-offender).
- Classroom circles.
- Family group conferencing.
- Grade reductions for cheating, plagiarism, and as otherwise permitted by policy.
- Detention, including outside regular school hours.
- Sending the student to the office, another assigned area, or to in-school suspension (ISS).
- Assignment of school duties, such as cleaning or picking up litter.
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.
- Penalties identified in student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Restriction or revocation of district transportation privileges.
- School-assessed and school-administered probation.
- Corporal punishment, unless the student's parent or guardian has provided a signed statement prohibiting its use.
- Out-of-school suspension, as specified in **Out-of-School Suspension** on page .
- Placement in a DAEP, as specified in **DAEP** on page .
- Expulsion and/or placement in an alternative educational setting, as specified in **Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page .
- Expulsion, as specified in **Expulsion** on page .
- Referral to an outside agency or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by the district.
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials.

Prohibited Aversive Techniques

Aversive techniques are prohibited for use with students and are defined as techniques or interventions intended to reduce the reoccurrence of a behavior by intentionally inflicting significant physical or emotional discomfort or pain. Aversive techniques include:

- Using techniques designed or likely to cause physical pain, other than corporal punishment as permitted by district policy. [See policy FO(LOCAL).]
- Using techniques designed or likely to cause physical pain by electric shock or any procedure involving pressure points or joint locks.
- Directed release of noxious, toxic, or unpleasant spray, mist, or substance near a student's face.
- Denying adequate sleep, air, food, water, shelter, bedding, physical comfort, supervision, or access to a restroom facility.

- Ridiculing or demeaning a student in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning or mental health of the student or constitutes verbal abuse.
- Employing a device, material, or object that immobilizes all four of a student's extremities, including prone or supine floor restraint.
- Impairing the student's breathing, including applying pressure to the student's torso or neck or placing something in, on, or over the student's mouth or nose or covering the student's face.
- Restricting the student's circulation.
- Securing the student to a stationary object while the student is standing or sitting.
- Inhibiting, reducing, or hindering the student's ability to communicate.
- Using chemical restraints.
- Using time-out in a manner that prevents the student from being able to be involved in and progress appropriately in the required curriculum or any applicable individualized education program (IEP) goals, including isolating the student using physical barriers.
- Depriving the student of one or more of the student's senses, unless the technique does not cause the student discomfort or complies with the student's IEP or behavior intervention plan (BIP).

Notification

The CBC shall promptly notify a student's parent by phone or in person of any violation that may result in in-school or out-of-school suspension, placement in a DAEP, placement in a JJAEP, or expulsion. The CBC shall also notify a student's parent if the student is taken into custody by a law enforcement officer under the disciplinary provisions of the [Education Code 37.0012\(d\)](#).

A good-faith effort shall be made to provide written notice of the disciplinary action to the student, on the day the action was taken, for delivery to the student's parent. If the parent has not been reached by telephone or in person by 5:00 p.m. of the first business day after the day the disciplinary action was taken, the CBC shall send written notification by U.S. Mail. If the CBC is not able to provide notice to the parent, the principal or designee shall provide the notice.

Before the principal or appropriate administrator assigns a student under age 18 to detention outside regular school hours, notice shall be given to the student's parent to inform him or her of the reason for the detention and permit arrangements for necessary transportation.

Parental Involvement

The district has not adopted a policy for parental involvement in school disciplinary placements under [Education Code 37.0014](#).

Appeals

Questions from parents regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the teacher, campus administration, or CBC, as appropriate. Appeals or complaints regarding the use of specific discipline management techniques should be addressed in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). A copy of the policy may be obtained from the principal's office, the CBC's office, or the central administration office or through Policy Online® at the following address: [Board Policy Online](#)

The district shall not delay a disciplinary consequence while a student or parent pursues a grievance. In the instance of a student who is accused of conduct that meets the definition of sexual harassment as defined by Title IX, the district will comply with applicable federal law, including the Title IX formal complaint process. See policies FFH(LEGAL) and (LOCAL).

Removal from the School Bus

A bus driver may refer a student to the principal's office or the CBC's office to maintain effective discipline on the bus. The principal or CBC must employ additional discipline management techniques, as appropriate, which can include restricting or revoking a student's bus riding privileges.

To transport students safely, the vehicle operator must focus on driving and not be distracted by student misbehavior. Therefore, when appropriate disciplinary management techniques fail to improve student behavior or when specific misconduct warrants immediate removal, the principal or the CBC may restrict or revoke a student's transportation privileges, in accordance with law.

Removal from the Regular Educational Setting

In addition to other discipline management techniques, misconduct may result in removal from the regular educational setting in the form of a routine referral or a formal removal.

Routine Referral

A routine referral occurs when a teacher sends a student to the CBC's office as a discipline management technique. The CBC shall employ alternative discipline management techniques, including progressive interventions. A teacher or administrator may remove a student from class for behavior that violates this Code of Conduct to maintain effective discipline in the classroom.

Formal Removal

A teacher may initiate a formal removal from class if:

1. A student's behavior repeatedly interferes with the teacher's ability to teach the class or with other students' ability to learn.
2. A student demonstrates behavior that is unruly, disruptive, or abusive toward the teacher, another adult, or another student in the classroom.
3. A student engages in conduct that constitutes bullying, as defined by [Education Code 37.0832.0](#).

A teacher, CBC, or other appropriate administrator must notify a parent or person standing in parental relation to the student of the formal removal. A teacher may remove a student from class based on a single incident of behavior.

Within three school days of the formal removal, the CBC or appropriate administrator shall schedule a conference with the student's parent, the student, the teacher who removed the student from class, and any other appropriate administrator.

At the conference, the CBC or appropriate administrator shall inform the student of the alleged misconduct and the proposed consequences. The student shall have an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

When a student is removed from the regular classroom by a teacher and a conference is pending, the CBC or other administrator may place the student in:

- Another appropriate classroom.
- ISS.
- Out-of-school suspension.
- DAEP.

A teacher or administrator must remove a student from class if the student engages in behavior that under the [Education Code](#) requires or permits the student to be placed in a DAEP or expelled. When removing for those reasons, the procedures in the subsequent sections on DAEP or expulsion shall be followed.

Returning a Student to the Classroom

A student who has been formally removed from class by a teacher for conduct against the teacher containing the elements of assault, aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault may not be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's written consent.

A student who has been formally removed by a teacher for any other conduct may not be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's written consent unless the placement review committee determines that the teacher's class is the best or only alternative, and not later than the third class day after the day the student was removed from class, a conference in which the teacher was provided an opportunity to participate has been held. The student may not be returned to the teacher's class unless the teacher provides written consent for the student's return or a return to class plan has been prepared for that student.

Appeals of Formal Teacher Removals

A student may appeal the teacher's removal of the student from class to the school's placement review committee or the campus's threat assessment and safe and supportive school team, in accordance with a district policy providing for such an appeal to be made to this team.

In-School Suspension

An in-school suspension is not subject to any time limit.

A school's principal or other appropriate administrator shall review the in-school suspension of a student at least once every 10 school days after the date of the suspension begins to evaluate the educational progress of the student and to determine if continued in-school suspension is appropriate.

During in-school suspension, a student shall receive appropriate behavioral support services and comparable educational services as the student would receive in the classroom. If the student receives special education services, the student must continue to receive special education and related services specified in the student's individualized education program (IEP) and continue to have an opportunity to progress in the general curriculum.

[See First-Time Offense of Possession or Use of Nicotine Delivery Product or E-Cigarette for limitations to the general rule.]

Process

Before being suspended, a student shall have an informal conference with the CBC or appropriate administrator, who shall inform the student of the alleged misconduct and give the student an opportunity to respond to the allegation before the administrator makes a decision.

The CBC shall determine the number of days of a student's suspension.

In deciding whether to order in-school suspension, the CBC shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense [see Glossary];
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct;
3. The student's disciplinary history;
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct;
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care); or
6. A student's status as homeless.

The appropriate administrator shall determine any restrictions on participation in school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular and cocurricular activities.

Out-of-School Suspension

Misconduct

Students may be suspended for behavior listed in the Code of Conduct as a general conduct violation, DAEP offense, or expellable offense.

The district shall not use out-of-school suspension for students in grade 2 or below unless the conduct meets the requirements established in law.

A student below grade 3 or a student who is homeless shall not be placed in out-of-school suspension unless, while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property, the student engages in:

- Conduct that contains the elements of a weapons offense, as provided in [Penal Code sections 46.02 or 46.05](#);
- Conduct that contains the elements of assault, sexual assault, aggravated assault, or aggravated sexual assault, as provided by the Penal Code; or
- Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of any amount of marijuana, an alcoholic beverage, or a controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by federal or state law.

The district shall use a positive behavior program as a disciplinary alternative for students below grade 3 who commit general conduct violations instead of suspension or placement in a DAEP. The program shall meet the requirements of law.

Process

State law allows a student to be suspended for no more than three school days per behavior violation, with no limit on the number of times a student may be suspended in a semester or school year.

Before being suspended a student shall have an informal conference with the CBC or appropriate administrator, who shall inform the student of the alleged misconduct and give the student an opportunity to respond to the allegation before the administrator makes a decision.

The CBC shall determine the number of days of a student's suspension, not to exceed three school days.

In deciding whether to order out-of-school suspension, the CBC shall take into consideration:

- Self-defense (see **glossary**),
- Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
- The student's disciplinary history,
- A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
- A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
- A student's status as homeless.

The appropriate administrator shall determine any restrictions on participation in school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular and cocurricular activities.

Alternative Assignment

A parent or person standing in parental relation to the student may submit a written request to the principal or other appropriate administrator to reassign a student placed in out-of-school suspension. The parent or person standing in parental relation to the student must provide information and documentation that they are unable to provide suitable supervision for the student during school hours during the period of the suspension. It is the sole discretion of the principal or other appropriate administrator to reassign the student placed in out-of-school suspension.

Coursework During Suspension

The district shall ensure a student receives access to coursework for foundation curriculum courses while the student is placed in in-school or out-of-school suspension, including at least one method of receiving this coursework that doesn't require the use of the internet.

A student removed from the regular classroom to ISS or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity before the beginning of the next school year to complete each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal. 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.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) Placement

The DAEP shall be provided in a setting other than the student's regular classroom. An elementary school student may not be placed in a DAEP with a student who is not an elementary school student.

For purposes of DAEP, elementary classification shall be kindergarten–grade 5 and secondary classification shall be grades 6–12.

Summer programs provided by the district shall serve students assigned to a DAEP separately from those students who are not assigned to the program.

A student who is expelled for an offense that otherwise would have resulted in a DAEP placement does not have to be placed in a DAEP in addition to the expulsion.

In deciding whether to place a student in a DAEP, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the CBC shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see **glossary**),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

Discretionary Placement: Misconduct That May Result in DAEP Placement

A student may be placed in a DAEP for behaviors prohibited in the General Conduct Violations section of this Code of Conduct.

Misconduct Identified in State Law

In accordance with state law, a student **may** be placed in a DAEP for any of the following offenses:

- Engaging in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide.
- Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
- Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or of a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
- Involvement in a public school fraternity, sorority, or secret society, or gang including participating as a member or pledge, or soliciting another person to become a pledge or member of a public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang. (See **glossary**.)
- Involvement in criminal street gang activity. (See **glossary**.)
- Any criminal mischief, including a felony.
- Assault (no bodily injury) with threat of imminent bodily injury.
- Assault by offensive or provocative physical contact.
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of disruptive activities under [Education Code 37.123](#).

- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of disruption of classes under [Education Code 37.124](#).
- Possesses or uses an e-cigarette, as defined by [Section 161.081, Health and Safety Code](#), except that if a student who possesses or uses an e-cigarette is not placed in a disciplinary alternative education program for the first-time offense under [Education Code 37.008](#), the student shall be placed in in-school suspension for a period of at least 10 school days. See First-Time Offense of Possession or Use of Nicotine Delivery Product or E-Cigarette for additional information.

In accordance with state law, a student may be placed in a DAEP if the superintendent or the superintendent's designee has reasonable belief [see Glossary] that the student engaged in conduct punishable as a felony that occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event, if the student's presence in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers or will be detrimental to the educational process. Aggravated robbery or felonies listed as offenses in Title 5 [see Glossary] of the Penal Code are punishable as mandatory expulsions.

The CBC **may** place a student in a DAEP for off-campus conduct for which DAEP placement is required by state law if the administrator does not have knowledge of the conduct before the first anniversary of the date the conduct occurred.

Mandatory Placement: Misconduct That Requires DAEP Placement

A student must be placed in a DAEP if the student:

- Engages in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school. [see Glossary]
 - Commits the following offenses on school property, within 300 feet of school property as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:
 - Engages in conduct punishable as a felony.
 - Commits an assault [see Glossary] under Penal Code 22.01(a)(1).
 - Except as provided by Education Code 37.007(a)(3), sells, gives, or delivers to another person or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of a controlled substance or dangerous drug in an amount not constituting a felony offense. [School-related felony drug offenses are addressed in Expulsion .] [See Glossary for under the influence; controlled substance; and dangerous drug.]
 - Sells, gives, or delivers to another person or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of marijuana or THC. A student with a valid prescription for low-THC cannabis as authorized by Chapter 487 of the Health and Safety Code does not violate this provision.
 - Sells, gives, or delivers to another person an alcoholic beverage; commits a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol; or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of alcohol.
 - Behaves in a manner that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable volatile chemicals.

- Sells, gives, or delivers to another person an e-cigarette, as defined by Section 161.081, Health and Safety Code.
- Behaves in a manner that contains the elements of the offense of public lewdness or indecent exposure. [see Glossary]
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of an offense of harassment against an employee under Penal Code sections 42.07(a)(1),(2), (3), or (7).
- Engages in expellable conduct and is six to nine years of age.
- Commits a federal firearms violation and is younger than six years of age.
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of retaliation under Penal Code 36.06 against any school employee or volunteer on or off school property.
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of harassment under Penal Code 42.07 against any school employee or volunteer on or off of school property.

The student receives deferred prosecution [see Glossary], or a court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct [see Glossary], or the superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief [see Glossary] under Section 53.03, Family Code, for conduct defined as any of the following offenses under the Penal Code:

1. A felony offense under Title 5;
2. The offense of deadly conduct under Section 22.05;
3. The felony offense of aggravated robbery under Section 29.03;
4. The offense of disorderly conduct involving a firearm under Section 42.01(a)(7) or (8); or
5. The offense of unlawfully carrying weapons under Section 46.02, except for an offense punishable as a Class C misdemeanor under that section.

Sexual Assault and Campus Assignments

A student shall be transferred to another campus if:

- The student has been convicted of continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual or convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault against another student on the same campus; and
- The victim's parent or another person with the authority to act on behalf of the victim requests that the board transfer the offending student to another campus.

If there is no other campus in the district serving the grade level of the offending student, the offending student shall be transferred to a DAEP.

Process

Removals to a DAEP shall be made by the CBC.

Conference

When a student is removed from class for a DAEP offense, the CBC or appropriate administrator shall schedule a conference within three school days with the student's parent, the student, and, in the case of a teacher removal, the teacher.

At the conference, the CBC or appropriate administrator shall provide the student:

- Information, orally or in writing, of the reasons for the removal;
- An explanation of the basis for the removal; and
- An opportunity to respond to the reasons for the removal.

Following valid attempts to require attendance, the district may hold the conference and make a placement decision regardless of whether the student or the student's parents attend the conference.

Consideration of Mitigating Factors

In deciding whether to place a student in a DAEP, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the CBC shall take into consideration:

- Self-defense (see **glossary**),
- Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
- The student's disciplinary history,
- A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
- A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
- A student's status as homeless.

Placement Order

After the conference, if the student is placed in a DAEP, the CBC shall write a placement order. A copy of the DAEP placement order and information for the parent or person standing in parental relation to the student regarding the process for requesting a full individual and initial evaluation of the student for purposes of special education services shall be sent to the student and the student's parent.

Not later than the second business day after the conference, the board's designee shall deliver to the juvenile court a copy of the placement order and all information required by Section 52.04 of the Family Code.

If the student is placed in a DAEP and the length of placement is inconsistent with the guidelines included in this Code of Conduct, the placement order shall give notice of the inconsistency.

DAEP at Capacity

If a DAEP is at capacity at the time the CBC is deciding placement for conduct related to marijuana, THC, an e-cigarette, alcohol, or an abusable volatile chemical, the student shall be placed in ISS then transferred to a DAEP for the remainder of the period if space becomes available before the expiration of the period of the placement.

If a DAEP is at capacity at the time the CBC is deciding placement for a student who engaged in violent conduct, a student placed in a DAEP for conduct related to marijuana, THC, an e-cigarette, alcohol, or an abusable volatile chemical may be placed in ISS to make a position in the DAEP available for the student who engaged in violent conduct. If a position becomes

available in a DAEP before the expiration of the period of the placement for the student removed, the student shall be returned to a DAEP for the remainder of the period.

Coursework Notice

The parent or guardian of a student placed in DAEP shall be given written notice of the student's opportunity to complete, at no cost to the student, a foundation curriculum course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal and which is required for graduation. The notice shall include information regarding all methods available for completing the coursework.

Length of Placement

The CBC shall determine the duration of a student's placement in a DAEP.

The duration of a student's placement shall be determined case by case based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misconduct, the student's attitude, and statutory requirements.

The maximum period of DAEP placement shall be one calendar year, except as provided below.

Unless otherwise specified in the placement order, days absent from a DAEP shall not count toward fulfilling the total number of days required in a student's DAEP placement order.

The district shall administer the required pre- and post-assessments for students assigned to DAEP for a period of 90 days or longer in accordance with established district administrative procedures for administering other diagnostic or benchmark assessments.

Exceeds One Year

Placement in a DAEP may exceed one year when a review by the district determines that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or to district employees.

The statutory limitations on the length of a DAEP placement do not apply to a placement resulting from the board's decision to place a student who engaged in the sexual assault of another student so that the students are not assigned to the same campus.

Exceeds School Year

Students who are in a DAEP placement at the end of one school year may be required to continue that placement at the start of the next school year to complete the assigned term of placement.

For placement in a DAEP to extend beyond the end of the school year, the CBC or the board's designee must determine that:

- The student's presence in the regular classroom or campus presents a danger of physical harm to the student or others, or
- The student has engaged in serious or persistent misbehavior (see **glossary**) that violates the district's Code of Conduct.

Exceeds 60 Days

For placement in a DAEP to extend beyond 60 days or the end of the next grading period, whichever is sooner, a student's parent shall be given notice and the opportunity to participate in a proceeding before the board or the board's designee.

Appeals

Questions from parents regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the campus administration.

Student or parent appeals regarding a student's placement in a DAEP should be addressed in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). A copy of this policy may be obtained from the principal's office, the CBC's office, the central administration office, or through Policy Online® at the following address: [Board Policy Online](#)

Appeals shall begin at Level one with the Principal.

The district shall not delay disciplinary consequences pending the outcome of an appeal. The decision to place a student in a DAEP cannot be appealed beyond the board.

Restrictions During Placement

The district does not permit a student who is placed in a DAEP to participate in any school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular or cocurricular activity, including seeking or holding honorary positions and/or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.

A student placed in a DAEP shall not be provided transportation unless he or she is a student with a disability who is entitled to transportation in accordance with the student's IEP or Section 504 plan.

For seniors who are eligible to graduate and are assigned to a DAEP at the time of graduation, the placement in the program shall continue through graduation, and the student shall not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and related graduation activities.

Placement Review

A student placed in a DAEP shall be provided a review of his or her status, including academic status, by the CBC or the board's designee at intervals not to exceed 120 days. In the case of a high school student, the student's progress toward graduation and the student's graduation plan shall also be reviewed. At the review, the student or the student's parent shall be given the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular classroom or campus. The student may not be returned to the classroom of a teacher who removed the student without that teacher's consent.

Additional Misconduct

If during the term of placement in a DAEP the student engages in additional misconduct for which placement in a DAEP or expulsion is required or permitted, additional proceedings may be conducted, and the CBC may enter an additional disciplinary order as a result of those proceedings.

Notice of Criminal Proceedings

When a student is placed in a DAEP for certain offenses, the office of the prosecuting attorney shall notify the district if:

- Prosecution of a student's case was refused for lack of prosecutorial merit or insufficient evidence, and no formal proceedings, deferred adjudication (see **glossary**), or deferred prosecution will be initiated, or

- The court or jury found a student not guilty or made a finding that the student did not engage in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision, and the case was dismissed with prejudice.

If a student was placed in a DAEP for such conduct, on receiving the notice from the prosecutor, the superintendent or designee shall review the student's placement and schedule a review with the student's parent not later than the third day after the superintendent or designee receives notice from the prosecutor. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the review.

After reviewing the notice and receiving information from the student's parent, the superintendent or designee may continue the student's placement if there is reason to believe that the presence of the student in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers.

The student or the student's parent may appeal the superintendent's decision to the board. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the appeal. In the case of an appeal, the board shall, at the next scheduled meeting, review the notice from the prosecutor and receive information from the student, the student's parent, and the superintendent or designee, and confirm or reverse the decision of the superintendent or designee. The board shall make a record of the proceedings.

If the board confirms the decision of the superintendent or designee, the student and the student's parent may appeal to the Commissioner of Education. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the appeal.

Withdrawal During Process

When a student violates the district's Code of Conduct in a way that requires or permits the student to be placed in a DAEP and the student withdraws from the district before a placement order is completed, the CBC may complete the proceedings and issue a placement order. If the student then re-enrolls in the district during the same or a subsequent school year, the district may enforce the order at that time, less any period of the placement that has been served by the student during enrollment in another district. If the CBC or the board fails to issue a placement order after the student withdraws, the next district in which the student enrolls may complete the proceedings and issue a placement order.

Newly Enrolled Students

The district shall continue the DAEP placement of a student who enrolls in the district and was assigned to a DAEP in an open-enrollment charter school or another district including a district in another state.

When a student enrolls in the district with a DAEP placement from a district in another state, the district has the right to place the student in DAEP to the same extent as any other newly enrolled student if the behavior committed is a reason for DAEP placement in the receiving district.

State law requires the district to reduce a placement imposed by a district in another state that exceeds one year so that the total placement does not exceed one year. After a review, however, the placement may be extended beyond a year if the district determines that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or employees or the extended placement is in the best interest of the student.

Emergency Placement Procedure

When an emergency placement is necessary because the student's behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with classroom or school operations, the student shall be given oral notice of the reason for the action. Not later than the tenth day after the date of the placement, the student shall be given the appropriate conference required for assignment to a DAEP.

Transition Services

In accordance with law and district procedures, campus staff shall provide transition services to a student returning to the regular classroom from an alternative education program, including a DAEP. See policy FOCA(LEGAL) for more information.

Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses

This section includes two categories of offenses for which the Education Code provides unique procedures and specific consequences.

Registered Sex Offenders

Upon receiving notification in accordance with state law that a student is currently required to register as a sex offender, the district must remove the student from the regular classroom and determine appropriate placement unless the court orders JJAEP placement.

If the student is under any form of court supervision, including probation, community supervision, or parole, the student shall be placed in either DAEP or JJAEP for at least one semester.

If the student is not under any form of court supervision, the student may be placed in DAEP or JJAEP for one semester or placed in a regular classroom. The student may not be placed in the regular classroom if the board or its designee determines that the student's presence:

- Threatens the safety of other students or teachers,
- Will be detrimental to the educational process, or
- Is not in the best interests of the district's students.

Review Committee

At the end of the first semester of a student's placement in an alternative educational setting and before the beginning of each school year for which the student remains in an alternative placement, the district shall convene a committee, in accordance with state law, to review the student's placement. The committee shall recommend whether the student should return to the regular classroom or remain in the placement. Absent a special finding, the board or its designee must follow the committee's recommendation.

The placement review of a student with a disability who receives special education services must be made by the ARD committee.

Newly Enrolled Students

If a student enrolls in the district during a mandatory placement as a registered sex offender, the district may count any time already spent by the student in a placement or may require an additional semester in an alternative placement without conducting a review of the placement.

Appeal

A student or the student's parent may appeal the placement by requesting a conference between the board or its designee, the student, and the student's parent. The conference is limited to the factual question of whether the student is required to register as a sex offender. Any decision of the board or its designee under this section is final and may not be appealed.

Expulsion

In deciding whether to order expulsion, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the CBC shall take into consideration:

- Self-defense (see **glossary**),
- Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
- The student's disciplinary history,
- A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
- A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
- A student's status as homeless.

Discretionary Expulsion: Misconduct That May Result in Expulsion

Some of the following types of misconduct may result in mandatory placement in a DAEP, whether or not a student is expelled. (See **DAEP Placement** on page .)

Any Location

A student **may** be expelled for:

- Engaging in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide.
- Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
- Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or of a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
- Criminal mischief, if punishable as a felony.
- Breach of computer security. (See **glossary**.)
- Engaging in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school.

At School, Within 300 Feet, or at a School Event

A student **may** be expelled for committing any of the following offenses on or within 300 feet of school property, as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:

- Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of any amount of marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug, A student with a valid prescription for low-THC cannabis as authorized by Chapter 487 of the Health and Safety Code does not violate this provision. (See **glossary** for "under the influence.")
- Selling, giving, or delivering another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol; or committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol.
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable volatile chemicals.
- Engaging in deadly conduct. (See **glossary**.)

Within 300 Feet of School

A student may be expelled for possession of a firearm, as defined by federal law, while within 300 feet of school property, as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line.

Property of Another District

A student may be expelled for committing any offense that is a state-mandated expellable offense if the offense is committed on the property of another district in Texas or while the student is attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of a school in another district in Texas.

While in a DAEP

A student may be expelled for engaging in documented serious misbehavior that violates the district's Code of Conduct, despite documented behavioral interventions while placed in a DAEP. For purposes of discretionary expulsion from a DAEP, serious misbehavior means:

- Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
- Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat;
- Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Penal Code 1.07; or
- Conduct that constitutes the offense of:
 - a. Public lewdness under Penal Code 21.07;
 - b. Indecent exposure under Penal Code 21.08;
 - c. Criminal mischief under Penal Code 28.03;
 - d. Hazing under Education Code 37.152; or
 - e. Harassment under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1) of a student or district employee.

Mandatory Expulsion: Misconduct That Requires Expulsion

A student **must** be expelled under federal or state law for any of the following offenses that occur on or off school property.

Under Federal Law

- Bringing to school or possessing at school, including any setting that is under the district's control or supervision for the purpose of a school activity, a firearm, as defined by federal law. (See **glossary**.)

Note: Mandatory expulsion under the federal Gun Free Schools Act does not apply to a firearm that is lawfully stored inside a locked vehicle or to firearms used in activities approved and authorized by the district when the district has adopted appropriate safeguards to ensure student safety.

Under the Penal Code

- Unlawfully carrying on or about the student's person the following, in the manner prohibited by Penal Code 46.02:
 - A handgun, defined by state law as any firearm designed, made, or adapted to be used with one hand. [see Glossary] Note: A student may

not be expelled solely on the basis of the student's use, exhibition, or possession of a firearm that occurs at an approved target range facility that is not located on a school campus; while participating in or preparing for a school-sponsored, shooting sports competition or a shooting sports educational activity that is sponsored or supported by the Parks and Wildlife Department; or a shooting sports sanctioning organization working with the department. [See policy FNCG(LEGAL).]

- A location-restricted knife, as defined by state law. (See **glossary**.)
- Possessing, manufacturing, transporting, repairing, or selling a prohibited weapon, as defined in state law. (See **glossary**.)
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of exhibiting, using, or threatening to exhibit or use a firearm under Education Code 37.125.
- Behaving in a manner that contains elements of the following offenses under the Penal Code:
 - Aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
 - Arson. (See **glossary**.)
 - Murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
 - Indecency with a child.
 - Kidnapping or aggravated kidnapping.
 - Burglary, robbery or aggravated robbery.
 - Manslaughter.
 - Criminally negligent homicide.
 - Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual.
 - Behavior punishable as a felony that involves selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of a controlled substance or a dangerous drug.
 - Engaging in retaliation against a school employee or volunteer combined with one of the above-listed mandatory expulsion offenses.

Under Age Ten

When a student under the age of ten engages in behavior that is expellable behavior, the student shall not be expelled, but shall be placed in a DAEP. A student under age six shall not be placed in a DAEP unless the student commits a federal firearm offense.

Virtual Expulsion Program

In some circumstances, a student may be placed in a virtual expulsion program.

- The school must ensure students in the program have the necessary technology and internet and must provide it if needed.
- The virtual program must, as much as possible, meet the same requirements as an in-person disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP).

- The student's placement must be reviewed every 45 school days.
- If an in-person spot becomes available, the school should plan the student's return to in-person learning.
- If continued virtual placement is appropriate, the school must document the decision.

Consideration of Virtual Education as Alternative to Expulsion

Before a school district may expel a student, the district must consider the appropriateness and feasibility of, as an alternative to expulsion, enrolling the student in a full-time hybrid program, full-time virtual program, full-time hybrid campus, or full-time virtual campus. This requirement does not apply to a student expelled under [Education Code 37.0081 or 37.007\(a\), \(d\), or\(e\)](#).

Process

If a student is believed to have committed an expellable offense, the CBC or other appropriate administrator shall schedule a hearing within a reasonable time. The student's parent shall be invited in writing to attend the hearing.

Until a hearing can be held, the CBC or other administrator may place the student in:

- Another appropriate classroom.
- ISS.
- Out-of-school suspension.
- DAEP.

Hearing

A student facing expulsion shall be given a hearing with appropriate due process. The student is entitled to:

- Representation by the student's parent or another adult who can provide guidance to the student and who is not an employee of the district,
- An opportunity to testify and to present evidence and witnesses in the student's defense, and
- An opportunity to question the witnesses called by the district at the hearing.

After providing notice to the student and parent of the hearing, the district may hold the hearing regardless of whether the student or the student's parent attends.

The board of trustees delegates to the Superintendent authority to conduct hearings and expel students.

Board Review of Expulsion

After the due process hearing, the expelled student may request that the board review the expulsion decisions. The student or parent must submit a written request to the superintendent within seven days after receipt of the written decision. The superintendent must provide the

student or parent written notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting at which the board will review the decision.

The board shall review the record of the expulsion hearing in a closed meeting unless the parent requests in writing that the matter be held in an open meeting. The board may also hear a statement from the student or parent and from the board's designee.

The board shall consider and base its decision on evidence reflected in the record and any statements made by the parties at the review. The board shall make and communicate its decision orally at the conclusion of the presentation. Consequences shall not be deferred pending the outcome of the hearing.

Expulsion Order

Before ordering the expulsion, the board or CBC shall take into consideration:

- Self-defense (see **glossary**),
- Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
- The student's disciplinary history,
- A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
- A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
- A student's status as homeless.

If the student is expelled, the board or its designee shall deliver to the student and the student's parent a copy of the order expelling the student.

Not later than the second business day after the hearing, the Superintendent or designee shall deliver to the juvenile court a copy of the expulsion order and the information required by Section 52.04 of the Family Code.

If the length of the expulsion is inconsistent with the guidelines included in the Code of Conduct, the expulsion order shall give notice of the inconsistency.

Length of Expulsion

The length of an expulsion shall be based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, and statutory requirements.

The duration of a student's expulsion shall be determined on a case-by-case basis. The maximum period of expulsion is one calendar year, except as provided below.

An expulsion may not exceed one year unless, after review, the district determines that:

- The student is a threat to the safety of other students or to district employees, or
- Extended expulsion is in the best interest of the student.

State and federal law require a student to be expelled from the regular classroom for a period of at least one calendar year for bringing a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school. However, the superintendent may modify the length of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

Students who commit offenses that require expulsion at the end of one school year may be expelled into the next school year to complete the term of expulsion.

Withdrawal During Process

When a student's conduct requires or permits expulsion from the district and the student withdraws from the district before the expulsion hearing takes place, the district may conduct the hearing after sending written notice to the parent and student.

If the student then re-enrolls in the district during the same or subsequent school year, the district may enforce the expulsion order at that time, less any expulsion period that has been served by the student during enrollment in another district.

If the CBC or the board fails to issue an expulsion order after the student withdraws, the next district in which the student enrolls may complete the proceedings.

Additional Misconduct

If during the expulsion, the student engages in additional conduct for which placement in a DAEP or expulsion is required or permitted, additional proceedings may be conducted, and the CBC or the board may issue an additional disciplinary order as a result of those proceedings.

Restrictions During Expulsion

Expelled students are prohibited from being on school grounds or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities during the period of expulsion.

No district academic credit shall be earned for work missed during the period of expulsion unless the student is enrolled in a JJAEP or another district-approved program.

Newly Enrolled Students

The district shall continue the expulsion of any newly enrolled student expelled from another district or an open-enrollment charter school until the period of the expulsion is completed.

If a student expelled in another state enrolls in the district, the district may continue the expulsion under the terms of the expulsion order, may place the student in a DAEP for the period specified in the order, or may allow the student to attend regular classes if:

- The out-of-state district provides the district with a copy of the expulsion order, and
- The offense resulting in the expulsion is also an expellable offense in the district in which the student is enrolling.

If a student is expelled by a district in another state for a period that exceeds one year and the district continues the expulsion or places the student in a DAEP, the district shall reduce the period of the expulsion or DAEP placement so that the entire period does not exceed one year, unless after a review it is determined that:

- The student is a threat to the safety of other students or district employees, or
- Extended placement is in the best interest of the student.

Emergency Expulsion Procedures

When an emergency expulsion is necessary to protect persons or property from imminent harm, the student shall be given verbal notice of the reason for the action. Within ten days after the

date of the emergency expulsion, the student shall be given appropriate due process required for a student facing expulsion.

DAEP Placement of Expelled Students

The district may provide educational services to any expelled student in a DAEP; however, educational services in the DAEP must be provided if the student is less than ten years of age.

Transition Services

In accordance with law and district procedures, campus staff shall provide transition services for a student returning to the regular classroom from placement in an alternative education program, including a DAEP or JJAEP. See policies FOCA(LEGAL) and FODA(LEGAL) for more information.

Certain Felonies

Regardless of whether DAEP placement or expulsion is required or permitted by one of the reasons in the DAEP Placement or Expulsion sections, in accordance with [Education Code 37.0081](#), a student may be expelled and placed in either DAEP or JJAEP if the board or CBC makes certain findings and the following circumstances exist in relation to aggravated robbery or a felony offense under Title 5 [see Glossary] of the Penal Code. The student must have:

- Received deferred prosecution for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a [Title 5 felony](#) offense;
- Been found by a court or jury to have engaged in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a [Title 5 felony](#) offense;
- Been charged with engaging in conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a [Title 5 felony](#) offense;
- Been referred to a juvenile court for allegedly engaging in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a [Title 5 felony](#) offense; or
- Received probation or deferred adjudication or have been arrested for, charged with, or convicted of aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense.

The district may expel the student and order placement under these circumstances regardless of:

1. The date on which the student's conduct occurred;
2. The location at which the conduct occurred;
3. Whether the conduct occurred while the student was enrolled in the district; or
4. Whether the student has successfully completed any court disposition requirements imposed in connection with the conduct.

Hearing and Required Findings

The student must first have a hearing before the board or its designee, who must determine that in addition to the circumstances above that allow for the expulsion, the student's presence in the regular classroom:

1. Threatens the safety of other students or teachers;
2. Will be detrimental to the educational process; or
3. Is not in the best interest of the district's students.

Any decision of the board or the board's designee under this section is final and may not be appealed.

Length of Placement

The student is subject to the placement until:

1. The student graduates from high school;
2. The charges are dismissed or reduced to a misdemeanor offense; or
3. The student completes the term of the placement or is assigned to another program.

Placement Review

A student placed in a DAEP or JJAEP under this section is entitled to a review of his or her status, including academic status, by the CBC or board's designee at intervals not to exceed 120 days. In the case of a high school student, the student's progress toward graduation and the student's graduation plan shall also be reviewed. At the review, the student or the student's parent shall have the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular classroom or campus.

Newly Enrolled Students

A student who enrolls in the district before completing a placement under this section from another school district must complete the term of the placement.

Glossary

Abuse is improper or excessive use.

Aggravated robbery is defined in part by [Penal Code 29.03\(a\)](#) as when a person commits robbery and:

1. Causes serious bodily injury to another;
2. Uses or exhibits a deadly weapon; or
3. Causes bodily injury to another person or threatens or places another person in fear of imminent bodily injury or death, if the other person is:
 - a. 65 years of age or older; or
 - b. A disabled person.

Antisemitism is defined by [Government Code section 448.001](#) as a certain perception of Jews that may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. The term includes rhetorical and physical acts of antisemitism directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals or their property or toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. Examples of antisemitism are included with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's "Working Definition of Antisemitism" adopted on May 26, 2016.

Armor-piercing ammunition is defined by [Penal Code 46.01](#) as handgun ammunition used in pistols and revolvers and designed primarily for the purpose of penetrating metal or body armor.

Arson is defined in part by [Penal Code 28.02](#) as a crime that involves:

1. Starting a fire or causing an explosion with intent to destroy or damage:
 - a. Any vegetation, fence, or structure on open-space land; or
 - b. Any building, habitation, or vehicle:
 - (1) Knowing that it is within the limits of an incorporated city or town;
 - (2) Knowing that it is insured against damage or destruction;
 - (3) Knowing that it is subject to a mortgage or other security interest;
 - (4) Knowing that it is located on property belonging to another;
 - (5) Knowing that it has located within it property belonging to another;
or
 - (6) When the person starting the fire is reckless about whether the burning or explosion will endanger the life of some individual or the safety of the property of another.
2. Recklessly starting a fire or causing an explosion while manufacturing or attempting to manufacture a controlled substance if the fire or explosion damages any building, habitation, or vehicle; or
3. Intentionally starting a fire or causing an explosion and in so doing:
 - a. Recklessly damaging or destroying a building belonging to another; or

- b. Recklessly causing another person to suffer bodily injury or death.

Assault is defined in part by [Penal Code 22.01](#) as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another; intentionally or knowingly threatening another with imminent bodily injury; or intentionally or knowingly causing physical contact with another that can reasonably be regarded as offensive or provocative.

Breach of computer security includes knowingly accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system without the effective consent of the owner as defined in [Penal Code 33.02](#), if the conduct involves accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system owned by or operated on behalf of a school district and the student knowingly alters, damages, or deletes school district property or information or commits a breach of any other computer, computer network, or computer system.

Bullying is defined as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or damage to the student's property;
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
3. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
4. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying includes cyberbullying. (See below.) This state law on bullying prevention applies to:

1. Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Chemical dispensing device is defined by [Penal Code 46.01](#) as a device designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of dispensing a substance capable of causing an adverse psychological or physiological effect on a human being. A small chemical dispenser sold commercially for personal protection is not in this category.

Club is defined by [Penal Code 46.01](#) as an instrument, specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person

with the instrument, and includes but is not limited to a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk.

Controlled substance means a substance, including a drug, an adulterant, and a dilutant, listed in [Schedules I through V or Penalty Group 1, 1-A, 1-B, 2, 2-A, 3, or 4 of the Texas Controlled Substances Act](#). The term includes the aggregate weight of any mixture, solution, or other substance containing a controlled substance. The term does not include hemp, as defined by [Agriculture Code 121.001](#), or the tetrahydrocannabinols (THC) in hemp.

Criminal street gang is defined by [Penal Code 71.01](#) as three or more persons having a common identifying sign or symbol or an identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities.

Cyberbullying is defined by [Education Code 37.0832](#) as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an internet website, or any other internet-based communication tool.

Dangerous drug is defined by [Health and Safety Code 483.001](#) as a device or a drug that is unsafe for self-medication and that is not included in [Schedules I through V or Penalty Groups 1 through 4 of the Texas Controlled Substances Act](#). The term includes a device or drug that federal law prohibits dispensing without prescription or restricts to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

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 another person in the relationship. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense, as defined by [Section 71.0021 of the Family Code](#).

Deadly conduct under [Penal Code 22.05](#) occurs when a person recklessly engages in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury, such as knowingly discharging a firearm in the direction of an individual, habitation, building, or vehicle.

Deferred adjudication is an alternative to seeking a conviction in court that may be offered to a juvenile for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

Deferred prosecution may be offered to a juvenile as an alternative to seeking a conviction in court for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

Delinquent conduct is conduct that violates either state or federal law and is punishable by imprisonment or confinement in jail. It includes conduct that violates certain juvenile court orders, including probation orders, but does not include violations of traffic laws.

Discretionary means that something is left to or regulated by a local decision maker.

E-cigarette means an electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or

other substances to the individual inhaling from the device or a consumable liquid solution or other material aerosolized or vaporized during the use of an electronic cigarette or other device described by this provision. The term includes any device that is manufactured, distributed, or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, or e-pipe or under another product name or description and a component, part, or accessory for the device, regardless of whether the component, part, or accessory is sold separately from the device.

Explosive weapon is defined by [Penal Code 46.01](#) as any explosive or incendiary bomb, grenade, rocket, or mine and its delivery mechanism that is designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage, or for the principal purpose of causing such a loud report as to cause undue public alarm or terror.

False alarm or report under [Penal Code 42.06](#) occurs when a person knowingly initiates, communicates, or circulates a report of a present, past, or future bombing, fire, offense, or other emergency that he or she knows is false or baseless and that would ordinarily:

1. Cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
2. Place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or
3. Prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

Firearm is defined by [federal law \(18 U.S.C. 921\(a\)\)](#) as:

1. Any weapon (including a starter gun) that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive;
2. The frame or receiver of any such weapon;
3. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer, defined as any device for silencing, muffling, or diminishing the report of a portable firearm; or
4. Any destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, or grenade.

Such term does not include an antique firearm.

Graffiti includes markings with paint, an indelible pen or marker, or an etching or engraving device on tangible property without the effective consent of the owner. The markings may include inscriptions, slogans, drawings, or paintings.

Handgun is defined by [Penal Code 46.01](#) as any firearm that is designed, made, or adapted to be fired with one hand.

Harassment includes:

1. Conduct that meets the definition established in district policies DIA(LOCAL) and FFH(LOCAL);
2. Conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another person, including a district student, employee, board member, or volunteer; is sexually intimidating; causes physical damage to the property of another student; subjects

another student to physical confinement or restraint; or maliciously and substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety, as defined in [Education Code 37.001\(b\)\(2\)](#); or

3. Conduct that is punishable as a crime under [Penal Code 42.07](#), including the following types of conduct if carried out with the intent to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, or embarrass another:
 - a. Initiating communication and, in the course of the communication, making a comment, request, suggestion, or proposal that is obscene, as defined by law;
 - b. Threatening, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the threat, to inflict bodily injury on the person or to commit a felony against the person, a member of the person's family or household, or the person's property;
 - c. Conveying, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the report, a false report, which is known by the conveyor to be false, that another person has suffered death or serious bodily injury;
 - d. Causing the telephone of another to ring repeatedly or making repeated telephone communications anonymously or in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another;
 - e. Making a telephone call and intentionally failing to hang up or disengage the connection;
 - f. Knowingly permitting a telephone under the person's control to be used by another to commit an offense under this section;
 - g. Sending repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another;
 - h. Publishing on an internet website, including a social media platform, repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to cause emotional distress, abuse, or torment to another person, unless the communications are made in connection with a matter of public concern, as defined by law; or
 - i. Making obscene, intimidating, or threatening telephone calls or other electronic communications from a temporary or disposable telephone number provided by an internet application or other technological means.

Hazing is defined by [Education Code 37.151](#) as an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in a student organization if the act meets the elements in [Education Code 37.151](#), including:

1. Any type of physical brutality;

2. An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances;
3. An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the Penal Code; or
4. Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated.

Hit list is defined in [Education Code 37.001\(b\)\(3\)](#) as a list of people targeted to be harmed, using a firearm, a knife, or any other object to be used with intent to cause bodily harm.

Improvised explosive device is defined by [Penal Code 46.01](#) as a completed and operational bomb designed to cause serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage that is fabricated in an improvised manner using nonmilitary components.

Indecent exposure is defined by [Penal Code 21.08](#) as an offense that occurs when a person exposes the person's anus or any part of the person's genitals with intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person, and is reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

Intimate visual material is defined by [Civil Practices and Remedies Code 98B.001](#) and [Penal Code 21.16](#) as visual material that depicts a person with the person's intimate parts exposed or engaged in sexual conduct. "Visual material" means any film, photograph, video tape, negative, or slide of any photographic reproduction or any other physical medium that allows an image to be displayed on a computer or other video screen and any image transmitted to a computer or other video screen.

Location-restricted knife is defined by [Penal Code 46.01](#) as a knife with a blade over five and one-half inches.

Knuckles means any instrument consisting of finger rings or guards made of a hard substance and designed or adapted for inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with a fist enclosed in the knuckles.

Look-alike weapon means an item that resembles a weapon but is not intended to be used to cause serious bodily injury.

Machine gun as defined by [Penal Code 46.01](#) is any firearm that is capable of shooting more than two shots automatically, without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger.

Mandatory means that something is obligatory or required because of an authority.

Paraphernalia are devices that can be used for inhaling, ingesting, injecting, or otherwise introducing a controlled substance into a human body.

Personal Communication Device means a telephone, cell phone such as a smartphone or flip phone, tablet, smartwatch, radio device, paging device, or any other electronic device capable of telecommunication or digital communication.

Possession means to have an item on one's person or in one's personal property, including, but not limited to:

1. Clothing, purse, or backpack;
2. A private vehicle used for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, including, but not limited to, an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle;
3. Personal communication devices or electronic devices; or
4. Any school property used by the student, including, but not limited to, a locker or desk.

Prohibited weapon under [Penal Code 46.05\(a\)](#) means:

1. The following items, unless registered with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives or otherwise not subject to that registration requirement or unless the item is classified as a curio or relic by the U.S. Department of Justice:
 - a. An explosive weapon; or
 - b. A machine gun.
2. Armor-piercing ammunition;
3. A chemical dispensing device;
4. A zip gun;
5. A tire deflation device; or
6. An improvised explosive device.

Public Lewdness is defined by [Penal Code 21.07](#) as an offense that occurs when a person knowingly engages in an act of sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, or sexual contact in a public place or, if not in a public place, when the person is reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

Public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang means an organization composed wholly or in part of students that seeks to perpetuate itself by taking additional members from the students enrolled in school based on a decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of a qualified student. Educational organizations listed in [Education Code 37.121\(d\)](#) are excepted from this definition.

Reasonable belief is that which an ordinary person of average intelligence and sound mind would believe. Chapter 37 requires certain disciplinary decisions when the superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that a student engaged in conduct punishable as a felony offense. In forming such a reasonable belief, the superintendent or designee may use all available information and must consider the information furnished in the notice of a student's arrest under [Code of Criminal Procedure Article 15.27](#).

Self-defense is the use of force against another to the degree a person reasonably believes is immediately necessary to protect himself or herself.

Serious misbehavior means:

1. Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
2. Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat;
3. Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by [Penal Code Section 1.07](#); or
4. Conduct that constitutes the offense of:
 - a. Public lewdness under [Penal Code 21.07](#);
 - b. Indecent exposure under [Penal Code 21.08](#);
 - c. Criminal mischief under [Penal Code 28.03](#);
 - d. Hazing under [Education Code 37.152](#); or
 - e. Harassment under [Penal Code 42.07\(a\)\(1\)](#) of a student or district employee.

Serious or persistent misbehavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Behavior that is grounds for permissible expulsion or mandatory DAEP placement.
- Behavior identified by the district as grounds for discretionary DAEP placement.
- Actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
- Refusal to attempt or complete schoolwork as assigned.
- Insubordination.
- Profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures.
- Leaving school grounds without permission.
- Falsification of records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Refusal to accept discipline assigned by the teacher or principal.

Short-barrel firearm is defined by [Penal Code 46.01](#) as a rifle with a barrel length of less than 16 inches or a shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches, or any weapon made from a rifle or shotgun that, as altered, has an overall length of less than 26 inches.

Terroristic threat is defined by [Penal Code 22.07](#) as a threat of violence to any person or property with intent to:

1. Cause a reaction of any type by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
2. Place any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury;
3. Prevent or interrupt the occupation or use of a building; room, place of assembly, or place to which the public has access; place of employment or occupation; aircraft, automobile, or other form of conveyance; or other public place;

4. Cause impairment or interruption of public communications; public transportation; public water, gas, or power supply; or other public service;
5. Place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury; or
6. Influence the conduct or activities of a branch or agency of the federal government, the state, or a political subdivision of the state (including the district).

Tire deflation device is defined in part by [Penal Code 46.01](#) as a device, including a caltrop or spike strip, that, when driven over, impedes or stops the movement of a wheeled vehicle by puncturing one or more of the vehicle's tires.

Title 5 felonies are those crimes listed in [Title 5 of the Penal Code](#) that typically involve injury to a person and may include:

- Murder, manslaughter, or homicide under [Sections 19.02–.05](#);
- Kidnapping under [Section 20.03](#);
- Trafficking of persons under [Section 20A.02](#);
- Smuggling or continuous smuggling of persons under [Sections 20.05–.06](#);
- Assault under [Section 22.01](#);
- Aggravated assault under [Section 22.02](#);
- Sexual assault under [Section 22.011](#);
- Aggravated sexual assault under [Section 22.021](#);
- Unlawful restraint under [Section 20.02](#);
- Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual under [Section 21.02](#);
- Bestiality under [Section 21.09](#);
- Improper relationship between educator and student under [Section 21.12](#);
- Voyeurism under [Section 21.17](#);
- Indecency with a child under [Section 21.11](#);
- Invasive visual recording under [Section 21.15](#);
- Disclosure or promotion of intimate visual material under [Section 21.16](#);
- Sexual coercion under [Section 21.18](#);
- Injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person of any age under [Section 22.04](#);
- Abandoning or endangering a child under [Section 22.041](#);
- Deadly conduct under [Section 22.05](#);
- Terroristic threat under [Section 22.07](#);

- Aiding a person to die by suicide under [Section 22.08](#); and
- Tampering with a consumer product under [Section 22.09](#).

Under the influence means lacking the normal use of mental or physical faculties. Impairment of a person's physical or mental faculties may be evidenced by a pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior, the presence of physical symptoms of drug or alcohol use, or by admission. A student "under the influence" need not be legally intoxicated to trigger disciplinary action.

Use means voluntarily introducing into one's body, by any means, a prohibited substance.

Zip gun is defined by [Penal Code 46.01](#) as a device or combination of devices that was not originally a firearm and is adapted to expel a projectile through a smooth-bore or rifled-bore barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance.

PROPOSED REVISIONS

**Purchasing
Authority**

The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to make budgeted purchases for goods or services. However, any single, budgeted purchase of goods or services that costs ~~\$50~~\$100,000 or more, regardless of whether the goods or services are competitively purchased, shall require Board approval before a transaction may take place.

Exception for
Emergency
Contracts

In the event of a catastrophe, emergency, or natural disaster affecting the District, the Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to contract for the replacement, construction, or repair of school equipment or facilities in accordance with law, if emergency replacement, construction, or repair is necessary for the health and safety of District students and staff. The Superintendent shall report to the Board at the next regular meeting any contract made under this authority. [See Disaster Exception, CH(LEGAL)]

The delegation regarding emergency contracts does not waive competitive purchasing requirements under Education Code Chapter 44. Only the Board is authorized to waive competitive purchasing requirements under limited circumstances in accordance with Education Code 44.031(h). [See Emergency Damage or Destruction, CH(LEGAL)]

Purchasing
Procedures

The Superintendent shall develop purchasing procedures to implement the requirements of state and federal law. [See also CB, CBB, CH(LEGAL), and COA]

Purchasing Method

The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to determine the method of purchasing in accordance with CH(LEGAL) or CBB(LEGAL), as appropriate.

*Competitive
Bidding*

If competitive bidding is chosen as the purchasing method, the Superintendent shall prepare bid specifications. All bids shall be in accordance with administrative regulations, and the submission of any electronic bids shall also be in accordance with Board-adopted rules. All bidders shall be invited to attend the bid opening. Any bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for opening. Bids received after the specified time shall not be considered.

The District may reject any and all bids in accordance with state or federal law, as applicable.

*Competitive
Sealed Proposals*

If competitive sealed proposals are chosen as the purchasing method, the Superintendent shall prepare the request for proposals and/or specifications for items to be purchased. All proposals shall be in accordance with administrative regulations, and the submission of any electronic proposals shall also be in accordance

PURCHASING AND ACQUISITION

CH
(LOCAL)

with Board-adopted rules. Proposals received after the specified time shall not be considered. Proposals shall be opened at the time specified, and all proposers shall be invited to attend the proposal opening. Proposals may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time of opening. Changes in the content of a proposal, and in prices, may be negotiated after proposals are opened.

The District may reject any and all proposals in accordance with state or federal law, as applicable.

Electronic Bids or Proposals

Bids or proposals that the District has chosen to accept through electronic transmission shall be administered in accordance with Board-adopted rules. Such rules shall safeguard the integrity of the competitive procurement process; ensure the identification, security, and confidentiality of electronic bids or proposals; and ensure that the electronic bids or proposals remain effectively unopened until the proper time.

Responsibility for Debts

The Board shall assume responsibility for debts incurred in the name of the District so long as those debts are for purchases made in accordance with the adopted budget, state law, Board policy, and the District's purchasing procedures. [See CE] The Board shall not be responsible for debts incurred by persons or organizations not directly under Board control. Persons making unauthorized purchases shall assume full responsibility for all such debts.

Purchase Commitments

All purchase commitments shall be made by the Superintendent in accordance with administrative procedures, including the District's purchasing procedures.

Personal Purchases

District employees shall not be permitted to make purchases for personal use through the District's business office.

PONDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
DISTRICT OF INNOVATION AMENDMENTS

REMOVE THE FOLLOWING INNOVATIONS:

1. Innovation regarding Texas Education Code §37.005 regarding suspensions in excess of three school days, as approved by PISD Board of Trustees on May 16, 2024.
2. Innovation regarding Texas Education Code §37.006(1) and 37.007(e)(2) regarding discipline placement for students under age 6, as approved by PISD Board of Trustees on May 16, 2024.
3. Innovation regarding Texas Education Code §37.006 regarding mandatory DAEP placement for E-Cigarettes, as approved by PISD Board of Trustees on June 18, 2024.

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
PONDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Resolution No.: 082525-1**

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the Ponder Independent School District (the “District”) is authorized by §11.51 of the Texas Education Code (“TEC”) to govern and oversee the management of the public schools in the District; and

WHEREAS, Ponder Independent School District in response to the passage of House Bill 3 which amends §37.0814 of the Texas Education Code to require at least one armed security officer to be present during regular school hours, excluding a good cause exception from the requirement; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees finds that the District is unable to comply with TEC §37.0814 and therefore claims a good cause exception from compliance due to the availability or lack thereof of funding or personnel who qualify to serve as a security officer.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE PONDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT:

RESOLVED, the Board authorizes and directs the Superintendent to develop an alternate standard with which the District is able to comply, which may include providing a person to act as a security officer who is a school marshal, or a school district employee or a contracted employee who has completed school safety training in accordance with Texas Government Code §411.1901 and carries a handgun on school premises in accordance with Texas Penal Code §46.03(a)(1)(A).

RESOLVED, the Board of Trustees further authorizes and directs the Superintendent to develop and maintain documentation of the District’s implementation of and compliance with TEC §37.0814, including documentation related to the good cause exception claimed by the District. If this documentation is requested by the Texas Education Agency, the District shall provide that documentation to the TEA in the manner prescribed by the agency.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 25th day of August, 2025 by the Board of Trustees for the Ponder Independent School District.

By: _____
Bruce Laney
President of the Ponder ISD Board of Trustees

Attest: _____
Vangee Deussen
Board Secretary