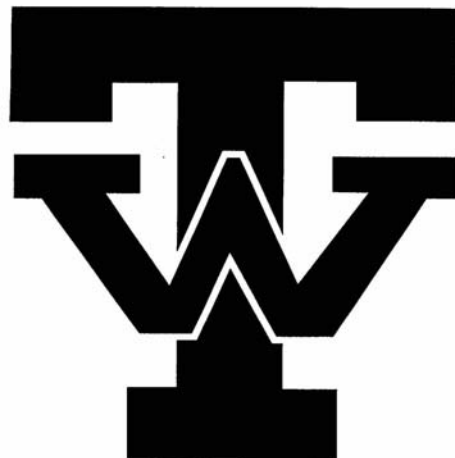


Parent & Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct

2011 – 2012



The West Independent School District does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, military status, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

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PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

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

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

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

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

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

Both students and parents should become familiar with the West Independent School District *Student Code of Conduct*, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found in this handbook and on the district website www.westisd.net and in the principal’s office.

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

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

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

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus the following required forms provided in the forms packet accompanying this handbook.

The following forms will be included in the student registration packet:

1. Parental Acknowledgement Form;
2. Student Directory Information and Release of Student Information Form;
3. Notices to Parents
4. Acceptable Use of Computers/Network Agreement
5. Corporal Punishment Response Form
6. Release of Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Learning Form (WHS school only)
7. Use of Student Work in District Publications

[See **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights** in **Section I** of this handbook for more information.]

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district’s policy manual is available at the district administration office or online at www.westisd.net.

CAMPUS HOURS

West Elementary School	7:55 – 3:00
West Intermediate School	7:45 – 3:10
West Middle School	7:45 – 3:25
West High School	7:45 – 3:30
	7:00 – 7:40 – “0” hour

** All campuses will open at 7:30. Students dropped off prior to 7:30 will not be supervised. **

SECTION I

PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Working Together

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

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child once your child begins enrolling in courses that earn high school credit.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. Parents are encouraged to access the Parent Portal on the West ISD website. [See **Academic Counseling and Academic Programs** in Section II of this handbook]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office your child attends 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** in Section II of this handbook.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. For further information, see policies at **GKG** and contact the campus principal.
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: PTO, Band, athletic boosters, and Ag boosters.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at **BQA** and **BQB**, and contact the campus principal.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council, assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. [See policies at **BDF**, **EHAA**, **FFA** and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** in Section II of this handbook.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at **BE** and **BED** for more information.] The board meets in the High School Lecture Hall on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30
- Supporting school fundraisers.

Parent Involvement Coordinator

The campus principal serves as the parent involvement coordinator who works with parents of students participating in Title I Programs and may be contacted at the school office (WMS, WIS, and WES only).

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights

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

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent.

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

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

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

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

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies **EF** and **FFAA**.]

Inspecting Surveys

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

Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff

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

Reviewing Instructional Materials

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

[Also see **Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction in Section I** for additional information.]

Displaying a Student’s Artwork and Projects

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

Accessing Student Records

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

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,

- Psychological records,
 - Applications for admission,
 - Health and immunization information,
 - Other medical records,
 - Teacher and counselor evaluations,
 - Reports of behavioral patterns, and
 - State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child.
- [See **Student Records** in **Section I** of this handbook.]

Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student

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

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

Granting Permission to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction

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

Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom

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

Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is involved with the selection of course materials for such instruction.

State law requires that any instruction related to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or human immunodeficiency virus or acquired immune deficiency syndrome must:

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice of behavior 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 is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity;
- Direct adolescents to a standard of behavior in which abstinence from sexual activity before marriage is the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases; and
- 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.

In accordance with state law, below is a summary of the district's curriculum regarding human sexuality instruction:

West ISD teaches age-appropriate human sexuality education in grades 6-12 in collaboration with the McLennan County Collaborative Abstinence Project (McCap). McCap's mission is to empower young people to make healthy choices. The primary goal of McCap is to reduce negative risk behaviors and thus improve health outcomes among adolescents. A supplementary resource from the Texas Department of State Health Services is power2wait.com.

The curriculum is ***Choosing the Best*** which is medically based and promotes healthy relationships utilizing the following five keys to effective abstinence and relationship education:

- **Motivational Learning Environment** — Video vignettes of real-life teens, in-depth discussions, classroom exercises and role-plays engage the students in learning.
- **Medical Learning Model** — Current information on STDs, emotional consequences and teen pregnancy.
- **Relationship Education and Refusal Skills** — Provides students with the confidence to handle negative peer and relationship pressures.
- **Parent Involvement** — Student Manual provides at-home opportunities for parent-student interaction.
- **Character Education** — Students are challenged to develop respect, self-respect, compassion, honesty and courage.

As a parent, you are entitled to review the curriculum materials. In addition, you may remove your child from any part of this instruction with no academic, disciplinary, or other penalties. You may also choose to become more involved with the development of curriculum used for this purpose by becoming a member of the district's SHAC. Please see the campus principal for additional information.

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

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

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

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3-12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy **EHBK (LEGAL)**.]

Requesting Limited or No contact with a Student through electronic Media

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

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

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

Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct

A non-custodial 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 misconduct that may involve placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy **FO (LEGAL)** and the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

School Safety Transfers

As a parent, you have a right:

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom if your child has been determined by the Superintendent to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25.0341. See the principal for information [See policy **FDB**].
[See **Bullying** in **Section II** of this handbook and policy **FFI (LOCAL)**.]

- To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDE(LOCAL)]
- To request the transfer of your child to another campus or a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. [See policy FDE.]

Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets, etc) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children. [See **FDB (LEGAL)**]

Parents of Students with Disabilities

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

Request for the Use of a Service Animal

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

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

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

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

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

Additional information regarding the IDEA is available from the school district in a companion document [A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process](#).

The following websites provide information to those who are seeking information and resources specific to students with disabilities and their families:

- [Texas Project First](http://www.texasprojectfirst.org) <http://www.texasprojectfirst.org>

- [Partners Resource Network](http://www.partnerstx.org/howPRNhelps.html) <http://www.partnerstx.org/howPRNhelps.html>

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is Carla Sykora or Laurie Trel at West High School at (254) 826-7510.

Parents of Students who Speak a Primary Language Other than English

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

Accommodations for Children of Military Families

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

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

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent related to leave or deployment activities may be excused by the district. The district will permit no more than 3 excused absences per year for this purpose.

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

STUDENT RECORDS

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

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

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records. Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18, is emancipated by a court, or enrolls in a post-secondary institution, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and under limited circumstances when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.
- District school officials who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.
- Various governmental agencies or in response to a subpoena or court order.
- Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.

- A school or institute of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

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

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

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

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-priced meals, the district will either provide a copy of the requested records or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the requested records. The address of the superintendent’s office is 801 N. Reagan West, Texas.

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

The district’s policy regarding student records found at **FL (LEGAL) and (LOCAL)** is available from the principal’s or superintendent’s office or on the district’s Web site at www.westisd.net.

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

Please note:

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

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Directory Information

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

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

Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes

The district often needs the use of student information for the following school-sponsored purposes: student directory, honor roll and perfect attendance, student yearbook or newspaper, student recognition activities, printed programs for UIL and extracurricular activities, and news releases to local media (See FL LOCAL).

For these specific school-sponsored purposes, the District has designated the following categories of information 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, enrollment status. This information will not be used for other purposes without the consent of the parent or eligible student except as described above at Directory Information. Unless you object to the use of your child's information for these limited purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time the district wishes to use this information for the school-sponsored purposes listed above.

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

The district is required by federal law to comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for students' names, addresses, and telephone listings, unless parents have advised the district not to release their child's information without prior written consent. A form is in the registration packet for you to complete if you do not want the district to provide this information to military recruiters or institutions of higher education.

SECTION II: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

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

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

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

Compulsory Attendance

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

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

Students enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten are required to attend school.

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

A student in grades 3–8 will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur before or after school or during the summer, if the student does not meet the passing standards on the state assessment for his or her grade level and applicable subject area.

Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance

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

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

In addition, a junior or senior student’s absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided the student receives approval from the campus principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed.

Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction termed “accelerated instruction” by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

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

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

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

The compulsory attendance notice is included in the registration packet.

Restrictions on Certain Non-Academic Activities

Students who accumulate excessive absences, either excused or unexcused, may be prohibited from participating in non-academic activities during and/or outside of the regularly scheduled school day.

Administrators will develop campus-specific criteria and guidelines. This information will be provided to students and their families at the beginning of each school year.

Activities affected may be subject to change. Campus administrators will have authority in reviewing extenuating circumstances and making final decisions regarding participation in these activities.

Attendance for Credit

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parent's Note after an Absence

When a student must be absent from school, the student—upon returning to school—must bring a note, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older.

All students must have the note signed by the attendance clerk in the office by 8:00 a.m. Notes from a parent or physician must be received in the attendance office within 3 days of the absence to be accepted.

Parents should call the student attendance office before 8:30 a.m. if a student is ill or will not be able to attend school. This call does not take the place of the required note signed by the parent describing the reason for the absence.

An attendance committee, the majority that is comprised of teachers, will be in place each school year. This committee will consider the following as extenuating circumstances as established by the board:

A student may be excused for temporary absence:

- resulting from any cause acceptable to the teacher, principal, or superintendent;
- for the purpose of observing religious holy days, including traveling for that purpose, if before the absence the parent submits a written request for the excused absence;
- for treatment by health care professionals if the student begins classes or returns to school on the same day of the appointment or treatment.

A student who is absent shall be permitted a reasonable time within which to make up work missed.

The district recognizes the following as extenuating circumstances for the purpose of granting credit for a class:

- Board-approved extracurricular activity or public performance subject to limitations in **FDD (LEGAL)** preceding.
- Required screening, diagnosis, and treatment for Medicaid-eligible students.
- Documented health care appointment, if the student begins classes or returns to school on the same day as the appointment.
- Temporary absence resulting from any cause acceptable to the attendance committee.
- Juvenile court proceedings documented by a probation officer.
- Absence required by the state or local welfare authorities.
- Family emergencies or unforeseen or unavoidable instance requiring immediate attention.
- Approved college visitation (Prior approval by principal is required – 2 visits per school year- Juniors and Seniors only) Forms are available in the school office. This form is due to the principal 5 school days prior to the visit.

If the attendance committee finds there are no extenuating circumstances for the absence or if the student does not meet the conditions set by the committee to earn or regain credit, the student will not receive credit for the class, or be retained at the elementary level. If a petition for credit is denied, the student or parent may appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees by completing a written request to the Superintendent.

The attendance committee shall also determine alternative ways for students to make up work or regain credit lost because of absences. Students meeting the requirements set forth by the attendance committee shall have credit for the class reinstated. Students may also appeal the ruling of the attendance committee for making up work or regaining credit.

If the committee determines that there are no extenuating circumstances, the board established the following as alternative ways to make up work or regain credit for a class:

- 1) mandatory tutorials extra work to be done *
- 2) outside of classroom time to make up work/time missed
- 3) summer school (1-12)
- 4) correspondence courses
- 5) credit by examination
- 6) other methods deemed appropriate by the attendance committee

* Attendance times for these will be established by the committee based on each individual case.[See policy **FEC(Local)**]

A student may request a hearing before the attendance committee. This committee will be convened as soon as possible to consider the appeal.

Students denied credit by the committee may appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees. The board's decision may be appealed to the county district court by trial de novo.

Students who have been absent for any reason are encouraged to make up the work they missed within the time given by the teacher. Failure to make up work may result in academic penalties.

Students who are absent for a full day due to illness other than for a documented health care appointment, will not be allowed to participate in school-related activities on that day or evening.

Students who attend four periods a day at West Middle School and students who attend four periods a day at West High School could be allowed to participate with the approval of the event director and the discretion of the principal.

Students who are absent from school or from any class without permission will be considered truant and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Students may not leave school without reporting to the office with a note from his or her parent that morning and must present the note to the office personnel. Students who become ill during the school day **must**, with the teacher's permission, report to the nurse. Truancy referrals and In-School Suspension will be given for failure to sign-out in the office. Further discipline action will be taken as necessary.

Students in grades 6-8 as well as 9-12 will follow the attendance policy as written. Students in grades K-5 will follow the policy in every way with the following exception: Teachers will act on behalf of the principal and the attendance committee in determining extenuating circumstances on a daily basis. A student may appeal a teacher's decision to the principal. Further appeals will continue as in the regular policy.

In grades K-5, absences are counted at the official attendance period (set by the administration). In grades 6-12, students are counted in attendance class period by class period.

Teachers in grades K-5 are responsible for maintaining a record of each student's absence and whether or not the absence is due to extenuating circumstances. In grades 6-12, the office will maintain records of student's absences and whether or not the absence is due to extenuating circumstances.

Class time is important. Doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time. For further information, see policies at **EHBC, EIA, FDC, and FDD**.

Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness

After a student has missed more than five (5) consecutive days because of personal illness, the student must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school. See **FEC (LOCAL)**. Failure to bring the signed note from the physician will result in the student receiving an unexcused absence.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor of health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school. [See policy **FEC(LOCAL)**]

Driver's License Attendance Verification

For a student between the ages of 16 and 18 to obtain a driver license, the Texas Department of Public Safety must be provided written parental consent to access the student's records for purposes of verifying 90 percent attendance for credit for the semester.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

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

A student removed to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete a course needed to fulfill the student's high school graduation requirements before the beginning of the next school year. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the coursework through any

method available, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district.

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school.

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

AWARDS AND HONORS

[See also **Class Rank** and **Academic Counseling** in **Section II** of this handbook.]

BULLYING

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

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

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, counselor, principal, or another district employee. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying and will take appropriate disciplinary action if an investigation indicates that bullying has occurred.

[Also see School Safety Transfers in Section II, Hazing in Section II, and policy **FFI (LOCAL)**].

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS

The district offers career and technical education programs of study in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (Animal Systems); Business Management and Administration (Business Information Management), Finance(Accounting); Human Services(Early Childhood Development and Services). Admission to these programs is based on interest, aptitude, age appropriateness and class space. West ISD will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs. Nondiscrimination Statement in Section I for additional information regarding participation in these programs.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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

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

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

As a parent, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse, the campus counselor or principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp.

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

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

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

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

http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml

http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml

Reports may be made to:

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

CLASS RANK / AUTOMATIC ADMISSIONS

For two school years following his or her graduation, a district student who graduates who ranks 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 Recommended or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program; or
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

The University of Texas may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the university's enrollment capacity for incoming freshmen. For students who are eligible to enroll in the University of Texas at Austin during the summer or fall 2011 term, the University will be admitting the top eight percent of the high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through an independent review process.

Students and parents should contact the counselor for further information about automatic admissions, the application process and deadlines. [For further information, see policies at **EIC**.]

CLASS SCHEDULES

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a class/course schedule to fulfill each period of the day. 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's schedule.

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

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

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

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

The University of Texas may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the university's enrollment capacity for incoming freshmen. For students who are eligible to enroll in the University of Texas at Austin during the summer or fall 2012 term, the University will be admitting the top nine percent of the high

school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through an independent review process.

Should a college or university adopt an admissions policy that automatically accepts the top 25 percent of a graduating class, the provisions above will also apply to a student ranked in the top 25 percent of his or her class.

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

[See also Class Rank/Highest Ranking Student in Section II for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class].

COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES

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

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit or Advanced Placement [AP].
- Enrollment in an AP or dual credit course through the Texas Virtual School Network;
- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with MCC and TSTC.
- Certain CTE courses.

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

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

West High School offers dual credit and advanced placement courses. For more information see the high school counselor.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

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

In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request for a conference with the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the Board of Trustees.

Acceptable Use of Computers/Network

We are pleased to offer access to computers, peripherals, and the Internet to the students of West ISD and believe that the Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. Our goal in providing this service to students is to promote educational excellence in schools by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

West ISD recognizes that the Internet can be used to facilitate many educational activities.

The Internet can be a valuable learning tool in the area of electronic-mail, research, electronic field trips, and library references. On-line resources available on the Internet allow classroom projects, scientific data collection and international cultural exchanges. With this access comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. Please note that the Internet is an association of diverse communication and information networks. It is possible that your child may run across areas of adult content and some material you might find objectionable. While the district will take reasonable steps to preclude access to such material and does not condone such access, it is not possible for us to absolutely prevent such access. It is believed that the valuable information and interaction available on these networks far outweigh the possibility that users may locate material that is not consistent with the educational goals of West Independent School District.

Proper conduct is expected of all end users who must adhere to strict guidelines. These guidelines are provided here so that you are aware of the responsibilities you are about to acquire. In general this requires efficient, ethical and legal utilization of the network resources.

If a West ISD user violates any of these provisions, his or her account could be terminated and future access could possibly be denied. The signature(s) on the acceptable use form is (are) legally binding and indicates the party (parties) who signed has (have) read the terms and conditions carefully and understand(s) their significance.

The following policy for acceptable use of computers and networks, the Internet, shall apply to all West ISD students. All technology equipment shall be used under the supervision of the appropriate West ISD faculty or staff.

Online Conduct

1. The computers/peripherals/Internet may not be used for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any other activity prohibited by West ISD policy or guidelines.
2. Students may not distribute personal information about themselves or others by means of any electronic communication system.
3. Users may not copy or download copyrighted programs or data except with the written permission of the copyright holder or designee. Such permission must be specified in the document or must be obtained directly from the copyright holder or designee in accordance with applicable copyright laws, West ISD policy, and administrative regulations.
4. Users may not upload/install programs to the network. Users may not download/install any software to the computer system, especially those that may damage the computers or the network. Users may not download/**install** programs for their own personal use.
5. Users may not send or post messages or pictures that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.
6. Users may not purposefully access materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. A student who gains access to such material is expected to discontinue the access as quickly as possible and to report the incident to the supervising teacher.
7. Users may not gain unauthorized access to resources or information, e.g., personal files or student records on or from any computer or server.
8. Users shall not take home ANY technology equipment (hardware or software) for any reason at any time.
9. Transmission of any material in violation of any US or state regulation is prohibited. Use for commercial activities is not acceptable. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.
10. Users may not use the network while access privileges are suspended or revoked.
11. Students are not allowed to print to network resources unless approved by Lab Coordinator/Teacher.
12. Students are not allowed to attempt to circumvent any firewalls, content filters, or security features of any kind.
13. Students are prohibited from participating in any chat room or newsgroup accessed on the Internet, with the exception of supervised teacher planned activities.

Access to the West ISD computers/peripherals/Internet is a privilege, not a right. All users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of all administrative regulations governing use of the system and shall agree in writing to allow monitoring of their use and to comply with such regulations and guidelines. Any system user identified as a security risk or as having violated West ISD and/or campus computer use guidelines could be denied access to the West ISD equipment/network. Noncompliance may result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and other disciplinary action consistent with West ISD policies. Violations of law may result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the West ISD.

The system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use and their decision is final. Also, the system administrators may close an account at any time as required. The administration, faculty, and staff of West Independent School District may request the system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges.

Etiquette on the Internet

All users of the West Independent School District's computers and networks are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette (netiquette). Informal rules of behavior have evolved for the use of communication on the Internet and other on-line services. Breaches can result in "flaming"--harsh criticism by

others on the Net--or restricted access to some resources on the Internet. These rules of behavior include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Be polite. Do not become abusive in your messages to others. Messages typed in capital letters are the computer equivalent of shouting and are considered rude.
2. Use appropriate language. Do not swear or use vulgarities, ethnic or racial slurs, or any other inflammatory language.
3. Do not reveal your personal address or phone numbers or that of other students or colleagues.
4. Do not pretend to be someone else when sending/receiving message.

The use of the West ISD system/network is for instructional purposes only.

Intellectual Property Rights

Students shall retain rights to work they create using West ISD computers/peripherals/network. West ISD shall retain the right to access or use any data remaining on West ISD's network.

Vandalism is Prohibited

Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy West ISD equipment or data or data of another user of the district's network, or any of the agencies or other networks that are connected to the Internet is prohibited. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance are violations of West ISD policy and administrative regulations and may constitute criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. Such prohibited activity includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses. Vandalism as defined above will result in the cancellation of system use privileges and will require restitution for costs associated with system restoration, as well as other appropriate consequences.

Consent Requirements

No personally identifiable information about a West ISD student will be posted on a web page under the district's control unless the district has received written consent from the student's parent.

Disclaimer of Liability

West ISD shall not be liable for users' inappropriate use of computers/peripherals/network or violations of copyright restrictions or other laws, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. West ISD shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy, age appropriateness, or usability of any information found on the Internet. West ISD will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the district's computers/peripherals/network/Internet.

CONDUCT

Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the District has adopted a *Student Code of Conduct* that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violations of the 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.

Corporal Punishment

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

Corporal punishment will be governed by the following conditions:

- Student will be told the reason for the corporal punishment;
- Punishment may be administered only by an administrator or designee;
- Instrument will be approved by the principal;
- Punishment will be administered in the presence of one other District employee and out of the view of other students.

A record will be maintained of each instance of corporal punishment. The teacher and principal will honor a parent's request that discipline methods other than corporal punishment be used. If any parent objects to corporal punishment for their student or students, a note must be sent to the principal indicating this matter.

Disruptions of School Operations

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

- Interference with the movement of people in an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization; and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district.

Cheating/Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

Students found to have engaged in cheating or other academic dishonesty will be immediately referred to the office. Parents will be notified and a “U” in conduct will be assigned for the grading period.

Plagiarism is the use of another person’s original ideas or writing as one’s own without giving credit to the true author. Plagiarism will be considered cheating and the student will be subject to academic disciplinary action that may include loss of credit for the work in question. Academic dishonesty will affect extra-curricular participation. Dual credit courses follow the guidelines of the providing institution.

In Grades 6-12 the following academic disciplinary action will be taken against cheating:

- (a) 1st offense - the student will receive a grade of “0”;
- (b) 2nd offense - “0” grade and disciplinary action will be taken

Social Events

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

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

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS

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

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

COUNSELING

Academic Counseling

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a high school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in grades 6 through 12 will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities.

To plan for the future, each student should work closely with the high school counselor in order to enroll in the high school courses that best prepare him or her for attendance at a college, university, or training school, or for pursuit of

some other type of advanced education. The counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

Details regarding the following programs should be discussed with the West High School guidance office:

- 1) Early admission to McLennan Community College
- 2) Dual credit with MCC or TSTC
- 3) Credit by Exam
- 4) Articulated credit with MCC
- 5) ECCT Competency Based High School Diploma through the ACT or CONNECT programs
- 6) Tech Prep
- 7) AP/Pre-AP Classes

Personal Counseling

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

Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports. [For more information, refer to policies EHBAA(LEGAL), FFE (LEGAL), and FFG (EXHIBIT).]

COURSE CREDIT

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

A student takes a course for both semesters, the two semesters will be averaged. The two semesters must average 70 for the student to receive 1 credit.

Credit by Examination may be taken for two types of credit:

1. Placement Credit (to receive credit for a subject in which the student has prior instruction)
2. Acceleration Credit (to skip a subject or grade).

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The first week following the end of the school year
- The last week of July
- The last week prior to Christmas break

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

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the principal no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. The district will (if personnel is available to administer the exam) honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the student's parent will be responsible for the cost of the exam. [For further information, see **policy EHDC (LOCAL)**.]

WISD Kindergarten Policy for Acceleration

A student in Kindergarten will be accelerated if he or she meets the following requirements:

1. A student must spend at least six weeks in the kindergarten class before acceleration may be considered.
2. The parent(s) or guardian(s) of students shall attend a counseling session with the campus principal, counselor, and the student's classroom teacher to discuss the best placement for their child considering chronological age and observed social and emotional development of the student.
3. The student must score 90% on a district selected assessment test and meet the state recommended standard on the Texas Primary Reading Inventory. Inventory which will also be used as an additional tool to determine a student's progress in reading.
4. The campus principal and the student's teacher must recommend that the student be accelerated.
5. The student's parent or guardian gives written approval for the acceleration.

Acceleration for Grades 1 through 5

A student in Grades 1 through 5 will be accelerated one grade if he or she meets the following requirements:

1. The student scores 90% on at least three of the following criterion-referenced tests and no less than 85% on the fourth criterion-referenced test for the grade level to be missed: language arts, mathematics, science and social studies;
2. The campus principal recommends that the student be accelerated; and
3. The student's parent or guardian gives written approval of the acceleration.

Acceleration for Grades 6 through 12

A student in Grades 6 through 12 will be accelerated if he or she meets the following requirements:

1. The student scores 90% on a district selected criterion-referenced test for the applicable course.
2. In situations where a student scores 85% to 89% on a criterion-referenced test, the district has the option of considering acceleration. This consideration will be made by a trained committee including a school counselor, campus administrator, and a teacher with knowledge of the grade level and content area(s) being considered. If it is found to be in the best interest of the student with regard to the academic and affective needs, the committee may make its recommendation for acceleration to the superintendent.
3. If a student is given credit in a subject on the basis of an examination, the examination score will be entered on the student's transcript. The scores will not be used in determining a student's GPA.

Fees

The district will offer examinations for acceleration from Texas Tech University or University of Texas, and no fee will be charged for the first examination. If a parent requests a second examination, the district will administer and recognize results of an examination ordered from Texas Tech University or University of Texas. All second examinations taken will be paid for by the parent or student.

DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

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

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

Dating Violence

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

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

Discrimination

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

Harassment

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

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

Sexual Harassment

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

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

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

Retaliation

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

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

Reporting Procedures

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

Investigation of Report

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

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

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

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

DISCRIMINATION

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** in **Section II** of this handbook.]

DISTANCE LEARNING

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

The Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) has been established as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TXVSN to earn course credit for graduation. There may be certain fees associated with this enrollment. In limited circumstances, a student in grade 8 may also be eligible to enroll in a course through the TxVSN. Depending on the TxVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the "no pass, no play" Rules. [Also see **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations** in **Section II** of this handbook.]

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

The additional distance learning opportunities available to district students are certain credit recovery classes offered on line by permission from campus principal.

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

DELIVERIES AT SCHOOL

Delivery of flowers, balloons, or other such gifts will be delivered to the school office and held until the end of the school day. Please consider deliveries of such gifts to home addresses. Deliveries will be accepted and delivered to faculty and staff members.

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS

School Materials

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

School newspapers and yearbooks are available to all students.

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

[See **Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes** in **Section I** of this handbook.]

Non-school Materials...from Students

Students must obtain prior approval from the campus principal before posting, circulating, or distributing more than 10 copies of written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made within two school days.

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

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

Non-school Materials...from Others

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policy **GKDA**. To be considered for distribution any non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the principal for specific 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 at **DGBA, FNG or GF**.]

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.

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

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

DRESS AND GROOMING

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

The dress code cannot cover every style and situation that may arise. **Campus administration will have the authority to make rulings in regards to dress code.**

Student dress and grooming should meet the following standards:

Shirts, Blouses, Sweatshirts, Vest, Jackets:

- No tank tops, strapless tops, spaghetti tops, backless, large armholes or off the shoulder tops.
- No low necklines (which reveal too much cleavage)
- No see-through, too tight, mesh shirts
- Boys must wear shirts with sleeves and shirts must be moderate in length to be worn un-tucked.
- Tops must meet the beltline and must not reveal undergarments or skin.
- No tops that are too tight such as spandex/lycra
- No jackets or coats longer than mid-thigh length.

Dresses, Jumpers, Skirts, Shorts, Skorts, Capris:

- All of the items listed above must be modest in length. At intermediate school, middle school and high school, skirts, shorts, and skorts must be at or below the middle of the thigh.
- No biker shorts or wind shorts
- No shorts, skirts, or skorts that sag or that are too tight.
- Nothing too tight such as spandex/lycra.

Pants, Jeans:

- Pants, jeans or skirts that do not fit at the waist, that cause a safety concern, and/or disrupt the educational process are not permitted.
- Students are not to wear jeans that are torn or have holes in them in inappropriate areas. (using standards that are applied to shorts, skorts, and skirts) No skin or undergarments should be visible above the mid-thigh area.
- No pajama wear of any type unless approved by campus administration.

Shoes:

- Footwear shall be worn at all times
- No shoes with wheels may be worn
- No house shoes or slippers.

Certain classes may require students to wear certain types of footwear. (ex. i.e. Closed toe shoes in Ag and some science classes, tennis shoes in PE, etc.)

Hair:

- Student's hair shall be clean, neat and well groomed in appearance.
- Hair is to be worn so that the eyes are visible, no longer than the bottom of ears and off the shoulders.
- Inappropriate and/or extreme hair coloring or style is unacceptable.
- Mohawks or extreme design cuts are not permitted.
- Facial area must be clean shaven. No beards or mustaches are permitted.

Headgear:

- Hats, caps, sweatbands, scarves, bandanas, doo-rags, hoods, sunglasses and other headgear shall not be worn inside the campus building without administrative approval.

Earrings and Body Piercings:

- Earrings worn on the ears are allowed only for the girls – two per ear.
- Body piercing other than ear piercing will not be permitted.
- Inserts are not allowed.

Eyewear:

- No sunglasses shall be worn in building.

Additional Information:

- No dress or grooming shall create a health or other hazard to a student's safety or the safety of others.
- No metal-studded collars, choker chains, pocket chains, armbands, wristbands, chains and/other metal studded clothing are permitted.
- No clothing intended to be worn as under garments may be worn as outer garments.
- No item worn to school or school event may advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs or any other substance prohibited under Board Policy, weapons, bombs, illegal acts, violence or anything that could be construed as provocative or offensive.
- No extremes in any type of clothing, footwear, make-up or jewelry will be permitted.
- No costumes are allowed unless approved by administration.
- No attire that is distracting or causes a disturbance or identifies a student as part of an unauthorized group.
- Mouth Grills are not allowed.
- Tattoos that are offensive, inappropriate or distracting must be covered at all times.
- Students that participate in extracurricular activities may be subject to additional standards. The sponsor/coach will distribute additional guidelines to participants.

The dress code cannot cover every style and situation that may arise. **Campus administration will have the authority to make rulings in regards to dress code.**

Dress Code Violations: Students that have violated the dress code will have one class period to correct the issue. Students will not be allowed to leave campus to resolve the dress code violation. If the violation is not corrected, the student will be removed from class for the remainder of the day. Additional consequences will occur for repeat offenders. If there are any questions regarding dress code, contact campus administration.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones**

For safety purposes, the district permits, students to possess, mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved

instructional purposes. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as net books, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers.

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

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day the device will be confiscated. The student/parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15.00.

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

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

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of conduct. The district will not be responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices.

Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices

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

Acceptable Use of district Technology Resources

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in the use of district-owned technology resources for instructional purposes; specific resources may be issued individually to students. Use of these technological resources, which include the district's network systems and use of district equipment, 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 sending, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images, or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student code of conduct and may in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement.

END-OF-COURSE (EOC) ASSESSMENTS

See Course Credit in Section II, Grading Guidelines in Section II, Graduation in Section II, and Standardized Testing in Section II.

EXEMPTION GUIDELINES for WEST HIGH SCHOOL

Students at West High School may earn one or more exemptions from semester examinations, dependent on their grade classification. Exemptions are tied to the student's grade average, attendance, conduct, and other criteria for that semester. For spring semester exemptions, TAKS scores and tardies will also be considered. Students are

required to complete and submit an exemption request form, and requests will be evaluated according to the following criteria.

Grade Classification

- Freshmen may be exempt from one exam each *semester.
- Sophomores may be exempt from two exams each *semester.
- Juniors may be exempt from three exams each *semester (only two may be in core subjects—English, Math, Social Studies, or Science).
- Seniors may be exempt from all exams each semester.

** Students in grades 9-11 may not request exemptions for the same course in both semesters—they must take at least one exam in each full-year course.*

Grade Average/Attendance

- Grade of 80-84 with not more than one excused **absence;
- Grade of 85-89 with not more than two excused **absences; or
- Grade of 90-100 with not more than three excused **absences.

***For exemption purposes, the following policies will apply:*

- *Three tardies in a class will equal one absence.*
- *Certain absences will be excluded, including but not limited to:*
 - *Participation in school-related, school-supervised activities;*
 - *School-approved mentorship in fulfillment of Distinguished Achievement Program requirements;*
 - *Required screening, diagnosis, and/or treatment for Medicaid-eligible students;*
 - *Observance of religious holy days, including travel (1 day to/from the site);*
 - *Sounding “Taps” at a military honors funeral held in Texas;*
 - *Administrator-approved college visits;*
 - *Required court appearance, including travel (1 day to/from the site); or*
 - *Documented health care appointment, if the student attends classes the same day.*

TAKS Scores (Spring Only)

A student who fails to meet standard on any spring TAKS assessment will be ineligible for an exemption in the related course.

Other Criteria

Certain conditions will render a student ineligible for any exemptions during the semester in question:

- Any unexcused absence;
- Any disciplinary action resulting in a removal from class (OSS/ISS/DAEP/Expulsion);
- The student owes any fines or fees as of the deadline date for exemption requests; or
- The student has been found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism.

Individual students may request consideration for extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

EXEMPTION GUIDELINES for WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL

Students at West Middle School may earn one or more exemptions from semester examinations, dependent on their grade classification. Exemptions are tied to the student’s grade average, attendance, conduct, and other criteria for that semester. For spring semester exemptions, TAKS scores and tardies will also be considered. Students are required to complete and submit an exemption request form, and requests will be evaluated according to the following criteria.

Grade Classification

- In the fall semester: 6th-8th Grade may be exempt from the English/LA Exam ONLY provided that they meet the eligibility requirements posted below and pass six (6) book tests for the *Reading Counts* program.
- In the Spring semester, 6th and 7th Grade may be exempt from one Core class (Math, Science, English/LA, or Social Studies) exam and the 8th Grade may be exempt from two Core classes (Math, Science, English/LA, or Social Studies) exams. If students choose the English/LA exemption, they must have passed at least twelve (12) book tests for the year from the *Reading Counts* program.

** Students in grades 6-8 may not request exemptions for the same course in both semesters—they must take at least one exam in each full-year course.*

Grade Average/Attendance

- Have an 85 **overall** average in the class in which they choose to use an exemption
- Be passing **all** classes with at least an 80 average in each class **during the 3rd grading period** (for 1st semester exemption) or **during 6th grading period** (for 2nd semester exemption).
- No more than three excused absences or any unexcused absences in any class during a semester in question
- If a student is absent from an exam for which an exemption was granted, then the exemption is lost and he/she will be required to take a make-up exam.

***For exemption purposes, the following policies will apply:*

- Three tardies in a class will equal one absence.
- Certain absences will be excluded, including but not limited to:
 - Participation in school-related, school-supervised activities;
 - Required screening, diagnosis, and/or treatment for Medicaid-eligible students;
 - Observance of religious holy days, including travel (1 day to/from the site);
 - Required court appearance, including travel (1 day to/from the site); or
 - Documented health care appointment, if the student attends classes the same day.
- All students will be required to remain in the classroom during the scheduled semester exams and students with exemptions will have an alternative activity; students with exemptions who become a distraction or do not complete the activity will lose their exemption and **will be required to take the exam.**

TAKS Scores (Spring Only)

A student who fails to meet standard on any spring TAKS assessment will be ineligible for an exemption in the related course.

Other Criteria

Certain conditions will render a student ineligible for any exemptions during the semester in question:

- Any unexcused absence;
- Any disciplinary action resulting in a removal from class (OSS/ISS/DAEP/Expulsion);
- The student owes any fines or fees as of the deadline date for exemption requests; or
- The student has been found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism.

Individual students may request consideration for extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

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

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

The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class, other than an Advanced Placement or international baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or language other than English may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to fifteen absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five absences for post-district competition, prior to state, and a maximum of two 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 receive an unexcused absence.

A student serving in-school suspension (for any reason other than tardies) who has not completed his/her ISS assignment may not participate or attend any extracurricular activity (besides practice) until the assignment is completed. The extracurricular sponsor will determine participation in the extracurricular activity following completion of ISS.

Any other restriction on participation related to discipline may be found in the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Junior exhibitors and contestants suspended under Texas Education Code 33.081 “No Pass, No Play” are ineligible to participate in any Livestock Exposition Junior activity, event or competition. Any animal owned by an ineligible exhibitor is ineligible for competition.

Standards of Behavior

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

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

Offices and Elections

Guidelines are available in the school’s principal office regarding the Student Council, National Honor Society, holding student offices, class organization, clubs, and the selection of cheerleaders, dazzlers and twirlers.

FEES

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

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.

- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credits 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.
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.
- 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. Application for such a waiver may be made to the principal. [For further information, see policies at **FP**.]

Non Sufficient Fund Checks

Non-sufficient fund checks (NSF) are handled through the District’s business office located at 800 Jerry Mashek Drive, West, Texas 76691. Business hours are Monday thru Thursday 8:00 am til 4:00 pm, Friday 8:00 am til 3:30 pm.

Upon the District receiving notice of an NSF check, a letter will be sent to the issuer regarding the amount due. The amount due will include an NSF fee. The NSF fee will be assessed on each check returned to the District.

Payment for NSF checks are accepted at the Business office at the hours listed above. Only cash or money order will be accepted in lieu of an NSF check. The check will be returned to the issuer at the time of payment.

If the check remains unpaid for two weeks after receipt, the District reserves the right to use the collection services of McLennan County. (phone: 254-757-5022)

Checks will not be accepted from any person(s) for future payment until the campus or department has been notified by the business office that the NSF check has been remedied.

Inquiries regarding NSF checks should be directed to the Business office (254) 826-3308.

FIELD TRIPS AND RULES FOR SCHOOL TRIPS AND OVERNIGHT TRIPS

There will be a limit of three (3) field trips per club or organization on school time; excluding UIL District, Bi-District, Regional and State Meets. This does not pertain to athletics, band or Junior Historians.

The sponsor of the club or organization is responsible for placing a list of student names that will be going on the field trip in the mailroom in the main building or send an email three (3) days in advance of the trip. All teachers are to check with that list and should any student fail to meet the requirements, such as grades, attendance, or conduct, the teacher should sign by that student’s name. The sponsor is to then check with that teacher before the student is permitted to go on the field trip.

UIL Requirements will be used as to a student’s eligibility to participate. Any student that has a “U” in conduct is disqualified from field trips until the “U” has been corrected.

Overnight Trips

Trips that require students to stay overnight will be permitted with the following conditions:

1. Students must be students of the club, team or organization as a representative of West Schools and have signed parent approval.

2. Proper supervision of students - 1 adult for each 6 students or less. School sponsor must travel with group. Example: 1 female adult for 6 female students; 1 male adult for 6 male students.
3. Place adults and students stay must be an established motel, hotel, or dormitory.
4. Location students are to participate must be more than one hour driving time away from West and must cause the student to miss his/her rest so that they will not be in shape for peak performance.
5. Must have approval of administration. Out of state trips must have approval from the Board of Trustees.
6. Transportation shall be a school bus when available. If private vehicle, the driver must be an adult, other than student, and must have approval of campus administration.

Rules for School Trips

Any high school student who does not report to the assigned place for return trip will be left, and it will be the student's responsibility to get home. We will notify parents of this action.

Any student who has consumed or who is under the influence of alcohol and appears at school or at any school activity or function will be subject to disciplinary action.

No smoking or any other use of tobacco will be allowed on buses or on school grounds.

Permission slips must be filled out and signed by the parents for any and all school sponsored trips.

FUND-RAISING

Student groups or classes, and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. Application for all money-raising projects or sales promotional projects must be approved by the sponsor and the campus principal. This applies to all student clubs or classes, outside organizations, and/or parent groups.

Fund-raising is NOT permitted on school property except as approved by the principal. For further information, see policies **FJ** and **GE**.

Students who receive products to sell for fundraising must sign for those products and are responsible for returning either the merchandise (if the manufacturer will accept merchandise returns), or the money for the products (if products sold or returning products is not possible).

GANG-FREE ZONES

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

GRADE CLASSIFICATION

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

Sophomore – minimum of 7 credits Junior – minimum of 14 credits Senior – minimum of 19 credits

GRADING GUIDELINES

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

Also see Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences in Section II for additional information.

It is the belief of the West Independent School District that all students can learn and we as educators are here to assist students in that learning process with meaningful programs, motivation, support, and guidance. Research has shown that high expectations by the teacher can make a dramatic impact on student achievement.

The guidelines in this grading policy were established to maintain uniform grading procedures throughout the district and these guidelines shall be followed by all teachers.

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

Also see Report Cards/Progress Reports and conferences, in Section II for additional information on grading guidelines. See Graduation below, Course Credit in Section II and Standardized Testing in Section II for additional information regarding EOC assessments.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

The teachers of Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten and the school principal shall develop a checklist of skills and behaviors appropriate to the Kindergarten level and directly related to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). This checklist shall include such things as:

Work Habits	Motor Skills	Social Development	Fine Arts
Self Reliance	Language Development	Readiness	Technology

Grades 1-12

Numerical scores will be determined in grades 1-12 (1st grade – second semester only) by grouping assignments into the following categories: Daily Work and Exams. These categories will be calculated using a range of percentages related to the maturity of the students and the increasing importance of exams to demonstrate mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The following range of percentages will be used at each grade level to calculate the numerical score earned. Each teacher will set their specific grading policy with their principal's approval.

	Daily Work	Exams
Grade 1-3	50%	50%
Grades 4-5	50%	50%
Grades 6-12	40%	60%

Daily Work will consist of class work, homework, lab work, and quizzes. There will be numerous grades recorded in this category as this is a formative assessment used to guide teaching/re-teaching.

Exams will consist of unit exams, chapter exams, oral exams, and lab exams. There will be a minimum of 3 exams per 6 weeks as this is a summative assessment used to demonstrate student mastery.

Semester exams shall be given in grades 6-12 only. This semester exam shall be over the entire semester's objectives. The semester exam shall count one-seventh (1/7) of the semester average. The grade earned shall be recorded. Each grading period average in that semester will count two-sevenths (2/7) of the total semester average. Final average for a given subject will be determined by adding both semester averages together and dividing by two.

Grades 1 –5

Students' semester averages in grades 1-5 will be determined by adding the three grading period averages and dividing by three.

Re-teaching

When there is a deficit in the students' knowledge and skill as indicated by failing grades, the sound instructional principle of re-teaching, involving presenting objectives in a different way, is necessary. Teachers should not allow significant gaps in learning to exist without re-teaching effort. Thus, the decision for the teacher becomes what approach to use in re-teaching and which objectives need to be re-taught. Results of this re-teaching process will be designated in the grade book.

Incompletes

A grade of incomplete may be given only under extreme circumstances such as hospitalization of the student, illness or death of a family member, serious illness of the student, and with written approval of the principal. Under no circumstances will a grade of incomplete be given because of a student's failing. The "I" grade is not to be used as a device to enable the student to pass a subject after the last day of the grading period.

Borrowing Points

Borrowing points from the next grading period is not permissible.

Granting Credit

A student must be in attendance at least 90% of the semester in order to receive credit for a class. (See attendance policy).

Homework

The term “homework” is defined as an assignment that necessitates a student working at home or outside of the class to complete an assignment begun in class, to strengthen the understanding of a learned concept through the application to written work or problems, and to locate and organize information about a subject through the process of research.

The amount of homework should increase as the student progresses through the grades. However, the district does not look with favor upon an inordinate amount of homework assignments. The district also feels that the students can develop better study habits and attain a higher level of achievement if they are permitted to study some during class time while under the supervision of the regular teacher in guided practice.

Guidelines for Assigning Homework: Assignment for work outside of school hours should meet the following criteria. Homework should:

- 1) Be meaningful to current topics in class discussion.
- 2) Never be used as a form of disciplinary action.
- 3) Instructions should be complete and clear. Assignments should be individualized when appropriate and compatible with the student’s ability.
- 4) If the teacher feels that an assignment is important enough to warrant a student’s time, it should be looked at and graded or discussed in class within three class periods so that the student obtains more immediate feedback.
- 5) Because students are usually enrolled in six or more classes, teachers should make certain that the length of time required to complete any given homework assignment is not excessive.
- 6) “Busy work” is to be avoided.

Make-Up Work

It is the responsibility of the student to see that all assignments missed are made up within a reasonable time after his/her return to school with an excused absence for full credit. The time allowed is one day per day absent. Any prior announced work is due on the scheduled due date.

Additional questions about make-up work should be directed to the teacher during a time that will not interfere with normal class time.

Suspension – If a student is suspended, make-up work is allowed with a maximum grade of 70.

[For further information, see policies at **EHBC, EIA, FDC, and FDD.**]

Grading Scale

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten – the student will be assessed using the following scale: not assessed at this time, working on mastery, or mastery.

Grades 1-12 – Numerical scores will be used in grades 1-12 for reporting progress to parents. The grading scale shall be as follows: A – 90-100; B – 80-89; C – 75-79; D – 74-70; Failing – Below 70.

In grades 1-5, the following designation for grading health, physical education, grades 1-3 handwriting and music will be used:

E – (Excellent) 90-100 S – (Satisfactory) 75-89 N – (Needs Improvement) 70-74
U – (Unsatisfactory) Below 70

GRADUATION

Requirements for a Diploma

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

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

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

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

Also see Standardized Testing in Section II for more information.

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

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

Also see Grading Guidelines above and Standardized Testing in Section II for more information.

Graduation Programs

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

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

To graduate on the Recommended Program, a student must perform satisfactorily on the Algebra II and English III EOC assessments, in addition to meeting the cumulative score requirements described above. To graduate on the Advance/Distinguished Achievement Program, a student must demonstrate advanced academic performance on the Algebra II and English III EOC assessments, commonly referred to as college and career readiness standards, in addition to successfully meeting performance standards on the other EOPC assessments. If this standard is not met, the student will graduate under the Recommended Program, regardless of whether the student has met all other requirements for graduation under the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program.

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

Courses	Number of credits Minimum Program	Number of credits Recommended Program	Number of credits Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program
English/Language Arts	4	4	4

Mathematics	3	4	4
Science	3	4	4
Social Studies	2.5	3.5	3.5
Economics	0.5	0.5	0.5
Physical Education	1	1	1
Speech	0.5	0.5	0.5
Language other than English		2	3
Fine Arts	1 (effective for grade 9 in 2010-2011 school year and thereafter)	1	1
Locally required courses	4 CTE	4 CTE .5 Teen Leadership	4 CTE .5 Teen Leadership
Electives	7.5 [prior to 2010- 2011 6.5(2010-2011 and thereafter)	1 additional elective .5 health recommended	(elective requirements met are CTE course) .5 health recommended
Miscellaneous			Completion of 4 Advanced Measures * (see below)
TOTAL	22 credits	26 credits	26 credits

***Advanced measures.** A student also must achieve any combination of four of the following advanced measures. Original research/projects may not be used for more than two of the four advanced measures. The measures must focus on demonstrated student performance at the college or professional level. Student performance on advanced measures must be assessed through an external review process. The student may choose from the following options:

- (1) original research/project that is:
 - (A) judged by a panel of professionals in the field that is the focus of the project; or
 - (B) conducted under the direction of mentor(s) and reported to an appropriate audience; and
 - (C) related to the required curriculum set forth in §74.1 of this title (relating to Essential Knowledge and Skills);
- (2) test data where a student receives:
 - (A) A score of three or above on the College Board advanced placement examination;
 - (B) A score of four or above on an International Baccalaureate examination; or
 - (C) A score on the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) that qualifies the student for recognition as a commended scholar or higher by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, as part of the National Hispanic Scholar Program of the College Board or as part of the National Achievement

Scholarship Program for Outstanding Negro Students of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The PSAT score shall count as only one advanced measure regardless of the number of honors received by the student; or

(3) College academic courses, advanced technical credit courses, and dual credit courses, including local articulation, with a grade of 3.0 (B) or higher.

Information regarding specific courses required or offered in each curriculum area, along with a description of advanced measures available to students in the advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program, will be distributed to students each spring in order to enroll in courses for the upcoming school year.

For information on the BYR Graduation Plan, please contact the campus principal.

Certificates of Coursework Completion

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

Students with Disabilities

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

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

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

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

Graduation Activities

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

Graduation Speakers

Graduating students will be given an opportunity to provide opening and closing remarks during the graduation ceremony. Only those students who are graduating and are class officers at West High School and the first through fifth academically ranked students at West Middle School will be eligible to give these remarks; however, if the student was assigned to disciplinary placement at any time during the spring semester, he or she will not be eligible to speak at graduation.

In addition to the opening and closing remarks, the graduating class officers at West High School and first through fifth academically ranked students at West Middle School may also have speaking roles at the graduation ceremony.

[For student speakers at other school events, see **STUDENT SPEAKERS** in Section II of this handbook.]

[See **FNA (LOCAL)**.]

Graduation Expenses

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

State Scholarships and Grants

Under the Texas Early High School Graduation Scholarship Program, students who complete the Recommended or Advanced/ Distinguished Achievement High School Program may earn financial credits in varying amounts to apply toward college tuition. The amounts depend on the number of consecutive months in which the student completed graduation requirements and the number of early college credits earned and may be used at public or private higher education institutions within the state. The counselor can provide additional information about meeting the program's eligibility requirements.

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

8th GRADE PROMOTION CEREMONY

Students must meet requirements to be promoted from grades 8 to 9 in order to participate in the Eighth Grade Promotion Ceremony.

HARASSMENT

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** in **Section II** of this handbook.]

HAZING

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

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

[Also see Bullying in Section II and policies FFI and FNCC.]

HEALTH RELATED MATTERS

Bacterial Meningitis

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

What is meningitis?

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

What are the symptoms?

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

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

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

How serious is bacterial meningitis?

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

How is bacterial meningitis spread?

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

How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

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

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

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

You should seek prompt medical attention.

Where can you get more information?

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

Physical Activity for Students in Elementary Grades and Middle School

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

Students in middle school shall engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters.

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

School Health Advisory Council

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held four meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the school website www.westisd.net. [See also policies at **BDF** and **EHAA**.]

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

[See **Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction** for additional information in Section I.]

Physical Fitness Assessment

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

Head Lice

West ISD school nurses will conduct periodic head lice screenings on selected classes and students. All checks are done one at a time. A letter will go out to the entire class when two or more cases of live bugs are found. Parents should then check their children daily at home for a period of two weeks. Please note that if a child is found to have head lice, his/her name will be kept confidential.

If a student is found to have head lice:

1. The student will be sent home from school and cannot return until treated with an FDA-approved pediculicide shampoo. Proof of treatment must accompany the child on his/her return to school (box top, store receipt for the shampoo). The child will bring the proof of purchase to the nurse's office and the nurse will recheck the child before the child is returned to class. If the school does not receive proof of purchase, the student's parents/guardian will be called and instructed to pick up their child. Over the phone confirmation from the parent/guardian will not be accepted as proof of treatment.
2. The student should be treated again 7 days after the initial shampoo (follow the guidelines outlined for specific FDA-approved treatments) to ensure that if any nits have hatched, the lice are killed before they lay eggs.

Vending Machines

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

Tobacco Prohibited

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

Asbestos Management Plan

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions, please contact the Director of Maintenance, (254) 826-3308.

Pest Management Plan

The district applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment may contact the Director of Maintenance, (254) 826-3308.

HOMECOMING QUEEN/KING at WEST HIGH SCHOOL

The Senior Class will nominate four senior girls for Homecoming Queen and four senior boys for Homecoming King. The Junior Class will nominate four junior girls for Princess. The Freshman and Sophomore Classes will select two girls respectively from their classes for Duchess. To be eligible a student must not have less than a "B"

average in core academic subjects for the previous semester and must be maintaining a “B” average in the core subjects he or she is taking. A student average is determined by averaging core courses only. Weighted grades are not used for this honor. Nominees must always have an “S” in conduct for the current year. Individual pupil behavior records are kept in the files in the principal’s office. The selection of the Homecoming Court will be selected by the whole student body of West High School.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

For information on services for homeless students, contact the District’s Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth, Dr. Jan Hungate, Assistant Superintendent, at the District administration office.

HOME SCHOOL STUDENTS

Home school students interested in attending West ISD must meet the following requirements

1. Student must submit a transcript or academic achievement record from the last or current school attended (including home school programs).
2. Student must be in attendance at West ISD at least one semester and meet the current graduation requirements before a high school diploma can be issued.
3. Placement tests must be given in the core subject areas to determine a student’s placement. Temporary placement may be made until the results of the test are known.

HOMEWORK

See **Grading Guidelines** in **Section II** of this handbook.

HONOR GRADUATES AND RANK IN CLASS

Middle School

Grades from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades will be used in calculating averages. Students must have a 90 average in grades from the 6th, 7th and 8th grades in the following subjects: English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies. Grades from the 7th and 8th grades will be used from the school previously attended by new students.

Since the curriculum at West Middle School is designed to meet the needs of all students, there is a considerable difference in the difficulty level of the various courses and programs. The Gifted and Talented Classes provide a much greater challenge academically than the regular program. Therefore, in order not to penalize students that are in these classes a weighted-grade system will be used for the Gifted and Talented Classes. Class rank, valedictorian, salutatorian, honor graduates and other academic honors will be determined by utilization of the approved weighted-grade system. This system is devised to insure that the students who satisfactorily complete the more difficult classes will receive a higher numerical ranking. All Gifted and Talented programs at West Middle School shall be weighted as 1.1. This weighted-grade shall not appear on the report card but will be used on the permanent academic record of the student.

The students who have the two highest averages will be the Valedictorian and Salutatorian of the graduating class. Grades from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades will be used in calculating averages.

Subjects used will be: English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Students must have attended West Middle School for the 7th and 8th Grades to be eligible for Valedictorian or Salutatorian.

Fourth and Fifth grading period grades will be used in calculating the last semester grades in the 8th grade. In case of a tie in grade averages, then the sixth grading period grade will be used.

High School

The curriculum at West High School is designed to meet the needs of all students. West ISD desires to develop a class rank policy that will support the district’s goal of increasing the percentage of students completing the Recommended High School Program. Class rank, valedictorian, salutatorian, honor graduates and other academic honors will be determined by utilization of the approved weighted-grade system. This system is devised to insure that the students who satisfactorily complete the more difficult classes will receive a higher numerical ranking.

The following policy effective August, 2005 and includes all students enrolled at WHS:

1. In computing averages for the second semester grade of the senior year for honor graduates, valedictorian, salutatorian, and for rank in class, only the 4th and 5th six weeks grades will be averaged.
2. When a student fails a course and subsequently takes it over and earns a passing grade, the passing grade will also be on the transcript and both grades will be included in the average.
3. Correspondence and credit by exam courses (either with prior instruction or for acceleration) will not be considered in determining rank.
4. Successful completion of a course taught on the WHS campus resulting in dual credit will be computed in the student's GPA, with appropriate weighting.
5. Graduating seniors who have earned credits toward graduation from an accredited school outside the district will have their transcript(s) evaluated. Weighted grade points will be assigned according to this policy.

A student must have been a student at West High School during ALL of his/her junior and senior years to be eligible for scholastic honors including Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Honor Graduate.

6. Grades will not be considered from non-accredited or foreign schools.
7. Transfer students or other students who have grades recorded based on letters instead of numerals shall have such grades converted to numbers according to the official grading policy of the school from which the grades were received. If such policies are not clearly stated, the student shall receive the following numerical grade equivalencies:

A+ = 99	A = 95	A- = 90	B+ = 89	B = 85	B- = 80
C+ = 79	C = 76	C- = 75	D+ = 74	D = 72	D- = 70
					F = 69

8. In the event two or more students have the same average, they will be given the same rank in class.
9. In the case of a tie for the valedictorian, the students will share the honor, but the following will be used to determine the student to receive the state scholarship:
 - The student with the most AP / PAP/advanced courses shall be considered first.
 - However, if a tie still remains, the student with the highest numerical grade average of all AP/Pre-AP/advanced courses taken shall receive the state scholarship.
 - In the unlikely event that a tie continues, then a standardized achievement test that includes English usage, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and math skills shall be given to determine the top student. The runner(s) -up will receive the Salutatorian honors.

10. Honor Graduate – West Scholars Academy

The following criteria applies to Honor Graduate recognition

- Must complete 4 advanced credits during the 9th and 10th grade year combined with at least 2 of those credits existing during the 10th grade year
- Must complete 4 advanced credits during the 11th and 12th grade year combined with at least 2 of those credits existing during the 12th grade year.
- Weighted ranking average of 90 or higher.
- Distinguished Graduation plan and completion of requirements.

(These students will receive gold cords that will be worn during graduation exercises.)

*Beginning with class of 2012, Honor Graduate must be member of the West Scholars Academy.

11. Local credit courses will not be used in averaging grades. The following courses are local credit courses and do not count on a student's grade point average: Office Practice, Athletics in 11th or 12th grades, Band/Dazzlers in 11th or 12th grades (after fine arts and PE credits are earned), PSAT/SAT/ACT prep classes, Psychology 2, PALS, and TAKS math, TAKS science, TAKS ELA, and TAKS social studies.

12. Algebra I and Health taken in the 8th grade count for high school credit, but is not averaged for the GPA.

Weighted Grades

The following is a listing of the courses offered at West High School that will be assigned a weighted grade. Grades shall be weighted as follows: 1.1 for advanced /PAP/AP classes and 1.15 for Dual Credit classes

AP Biology	PAP Biology
AP Calculus	Pre Calculus
AP Chemistry	PAP Chemistry
AP English III, IV	Advanced English I, II
AP Physics	Advanced Geometry
AP United States History	Advanced Algebra II
Foreign Language Level 3 & 4	Advanced Spanish I
Dual Credit Classes	Advanced World Geography
AP Art	Advanced World History

The designated weighted classes are advanced courses and are to be exempt from no pass/no play as long as grades do not fall below a 60 numeric average. Students with numeric averages below a 60 at the end of the grading period will become ineligible. A 60 average or above will be considered sufficient to regain eligibility in the advanced weighted courses. All classes not designated as having a weight of 1.1 or 1.15 will remain at 1.0

*Classes transferring to West that were weighted by a previous high school, not offered at West High School, will not receive weighted grades. Completion of course is required for weighted grade average calculation.

Early Graduates:

To be eligible to graduate in three years, the student shall complete all coursework and exit-level testing required of the ninth grade class in which he or she begins high school.

For the 2000-2001 year and thereafter, a student wishing to graduate in fewer than four years shall complete a written application in the counselor's office during the first semester of his or her sophomore year. Written parental approval shall be submitted with the application. The student shall receive counseling regarding requirements and schedules.

A student who completes the high school program requirements in fewer than four years shall be ranked in the class with which he or she actually graduates. Three-year graduates shall be eligible for all honors positions.

HONOR ROLLS

Students enrolled in West ISD will be eligible for two honor rolls: the All A Honor Roll and the A/B Honor Roll. In order to be on the All A Honor Roll, a student must earn an unweighted grade of 90 or above in every class in which the student is enrolled with a conduct grade of S and an S in all other areas at the elementary level (K-5). To be on the A/B honor roll, a student must earn an unweighted grade of 80 in every class in which the student is enrolled with at least one course with a grade of 90 or above with an S in conduct and an S in all other areas at the elementary level (K-5). Any student with an I (incomplete) at the end of a grading period will not be eligible for either honor roll. Honor rolls will be automatically pulled from teacher grade reports each grading period by the building principal. Honor rolls will be published on the school website unless a parent has requested in writing that a student's name not be included in such a posting.

IMMUNIZATION

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical contraindications 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, Immunization Branch, can be honored by the District. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC) 1946, P.O. Box 149347, Austin, TX 78714-9347; or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the school principal or nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubeola (measles), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, (polio), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, varicella (chicken pox) and meningococcal. Early Childhood and Pre-K students are also required to have immunizations in Haemophilus influenzae type B, hepatitis A, and invasive pneumococcal. The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an

acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Department of State Health Services. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

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

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>

The following information is available on the district website at www.westisd.net

- Immunization required for admission;
- Immunizations recommended by the DSHS;
- Health clinics in the district that offer the influenza vaccine; and
- A link to the DSHS web page with information on requesting an exemption from immunization requirements.

Provisional Enrollment

All immunization should be complete by the first date of attendance. The law requires that students be fully vaccinated against the specified diseases. A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate vaccine required by this rule. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the school. A school nurse or school administrator shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If, at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, the student is not in compliance and the school shall exclude the student from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

Documentation

Since many types of personal immunization records are in use, any document will be acceptable provided a physician or public health personnel have validated it. The month, day, and year that the vaccine was received must be recorded on all school immunization records created or updated after September 1, 1991.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Questioning of Students

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

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

Students Taken Into Custody

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

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

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

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

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

Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who is required to register as a sex offender or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors. [For further information, see policies **FL (LEGAL)** and **GRA (LEGAL)**.]

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

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

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

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

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

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found articles should be reported and brought to the principal's office. Students claiming articles must describe and identify articles before they receive them.

MAKEUP WORK

Makeup Work Because of Absence

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

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the make-up work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. [For further information see policy **EIAB (LOCAL)**.]

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.

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

DAEP Makeup Work

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

In-school Suspension (ISS) Makeup Work

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

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

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

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

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

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

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

Directions on over-the-counter packaging regarding age, dose and frequency will be strictly adhered to. Requests to alter dosage or frequency of medications must be accompanied by a physician's written note stating the dosage and frequency of medication to be given, and that it is necessary at school.

Medications prescribed or requested to be given three times a day or less will not be given at school unless a specific time during school hours is prescribed by a physician or special request by the parent/guardian.

Psychotropic Drugs

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

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

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, West ISD does not discriminate on the bases of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability providing education services, activities, and programs, including CTE programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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

Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Dr. Jan Hungate, Assistant Superintendent, 801 N. Reagan St. West, Texas, 254-826-7500.

ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability:
Dr. Jan Hungate, Assistant Superintendent, 801 N. Reagan St. West, Texas, 254-826-7500.

All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent: Dr. Marty Crawford,
801 N. Reagan, West, Texas, 254-826-7500.

MESSAGES TO STUDENTS / WEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL & WEST INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Your child's teacher needs to know what their students' regular after school routine will be. Changes in this routine should be sent to the teacher in writing. In case of an emergency, the office will make every effort to deliver a message to your child's teacher.

NONTRADITIONAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

West ISD offers alternatives to the regular programs through the CONNECT Program. This program is a Competency Based High School Diploma program. Students receiving one credit or more through the Connect Program must graduate from the Connect Program. Admission to the Connect Program is allowed when a student is:

- at least 17 years old; and

- has been in attendance at West High School at least 80% of the past semester; and
- teachers, counselors and administrators are in agreement that the student will not be able to graduate with his/her class even if credit is gained in all courses currently being taken.
- student's attendance, discipline and academic records and availability of space will be considered before placement.

PARENT PORTAL

West ISD will provide parents with an individual user name and password to be used to access information concerning their child's progress. Through the parent portal, parents will be able to access grades to date for each subject in which students are enrolled. A letter will be sent to each parent at the beginning of each school year or upon enrollment with instructions to access this portal.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION for ELEMENTARY- INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Any student needing limited participation in physical education will need a physician to state in writing the extent to which that child may participate. Forms to be completed by the physician may be obtained from the physical education teacher.

1. A student may be excused from physical education due to injury or illness for 3 consecutive days at the parents' request, after which a physician's request will be necessary.
2. Students should wear tennis shoes in class each day to help prevent injury.
3. Students should remove all objects from their pockets and leave all personal belongings in the classroom before coming to physical education class.
4. Girls must wear shorts under dresses and skirts.
5. Students may bring shorts and T-shirts to class and change into them before class begins.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS

Students desiring to participate in the UIL athletic competition shall submit annually a statement from a physician licensed to practice in the state indicating that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the athletic program.

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE

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

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

PRAYER

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

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

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

In grades 1-8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas on a grade of 70 OR above in three of the following areas: language arts, reading (1-5), mathematics, science and social studies. Grade-level advancement for students in grades 9-12 shall be earned by course credits.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

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

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

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

REPORT CARDS, PROGRESS REPORTS, AND CONFERENCES

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every grading period.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, each teacher shall provide notice of progress to the parent or guardian of each student regardless of grade average. This form must be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher within five days if the grade is lower than 70.

At the end of each grading periods' reporting period, schools in the West Independent School District shall give written notice to parents of students' grades in each class or subject. The notice shall include the number of times the student has been absent. Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and should be returned to the school within 5 days.

If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject during the grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. The report shall quote or summarize the requirements for advancement or course credit.

This policy does not apply to a student who is married, an emancipated minor, or an adult living alone.

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the superintendent pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See policies at **EIA (LOCAL)** and **Grading Guidelines** in Section II].

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

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject. In attempting to schedule a conference between a teacher and parent, the school shall give the parent at least two alternative dates for the conference.

Progress Reports to Parents of Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten Students

The kindergarten progress report shall be sent to the parents three times a year. The reporting periods shall be at the end of the second grading period, the end of the fourth grading period, and at the end of the sixth grading period (the end of the school year).

RETALIATION

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** in Section II of this handbook.]

SAFETY

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

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

Accident Insurance

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

Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

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

Grades 1-5

Students, teachers, and other district employees shall participate in frequent drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students must follow the direction of teachers or marshals quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

The purpose of a fire drill is to train students to leave the school with maximum speed and minimum danger. Fire drills are of the utmost importance in training pupils to conduct themselves in any emergency that might affect the entire student body. The only way such training can be of any value is for each pupil to go through his part of the performance as quickly and as quietly as possible.

The fire signal is three rings of the school bell.

When the fire signal sounds, all pupils should rise immediately and pass quickly and quietly from the room. While on campus, the teachers will remain between the pupils and the school building. Re-enter the building upon hearing two rings of the school bell. One ring of the school bell is a signal to stop and stand at attention.

- DO:** Walk briskly
- Open exit door if you are first person to reach it.
- Close door if you are the last one out.
- Go at least one hundred feet from the building, but do not go out in the street unless directed by teacher or administration.
- DO NOT:** Hold hands while walking.
- Go to lockers.
- Leave campus.
- Run or push.
- Loiter.
- Obstruct lanes to fire hydrants.
- Stand under or near electric lines.

Emergency Bells:

- 3 bells.....fire, leave the building
- 1 bell.....halt, stand at attention
- 2 bells.....return to room
- 1 long bell.....tornado drill or action

Grades 6-12

The fire drill signal will be demonstrated to students at the beginning of the school year. Students will be instructed with procedures to follow concerning returning to the building. Students will also be instructed on procedures for emergency bells.

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school may have to rely on written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

Emergency School-Closing Information

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early because of severe weather or another emergency.

The superintendent shall have the authority to dismiss school for part of a day or for longer periods of time, if necessary, in case of unusual or emergency situations.

If it is necessary to close school because of inclement (harsh, severe, stormy, snow, or ice) weather, a decision to do so will be made at the earliest possible time in order for the parents of school age children to make arrangements for

their child's care. We ask that parents and students listen to their local radio or television stations for news of closing due to inclement weather.

During actual emergency conditions, students and faculty shall be retained at the school buildings unless otherwise directed by the superintendent. Buses will not be made available for transportation until authorized by the superintendent or a designee, and civil defense vehicles, ambulances, firefighting units, police, and other authorized vehicles shall have priority in the vicinity of the school.

SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS

See Standardized Testing in Section II

SCHEDULE CHANGE GUIDELINES AT WEST HIGH SCHOOL

- A. Schedules are handed out to students during pre-registration the week before school starts. All class changes must be made before the 1st day of school. Staffing and class loads will be considered before schedule changes. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the principal.
- B. No drops of 9th grade athletics will be approved after the beginning of the 1st day of school.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

High School

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

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

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

Middle School/High School

Students arriving before 7:45 a.m. will report to the designated area and remain inside until the first bell rings. Students going to tutoring will not be allowed in the classroom building until 7:30 a.m.

Elementary and Intermediate School

Because of the growth of our student body over the past several years, student arrival and departure at school have become a major concern. We feel that in order to make these procedures both academically effective and safe, a uniform policy has been established. Children dropped off before 7:30 will not be supervised.

Elementary School/Intermediate School

Kindergarten students arriving at school before 8:00 a.m. must report to the cafeteria for breakfast or gym and not to the classroom. PK – 3 students who are picked up by parents/car riders will be dismissed @ 3:00 p.m. @ front of WES.

Students in grades 1-5 arriving at school before 8:00 a.m. must report to the gym and not to the classroom. These students will be dismissed when the bell rings at the end of the day and we ask that no parents arrive before 3:00 to pick up their children in these grades. Due to security doors, parents must wait outside for students. Please do not come to the rear of the building to pick up your children. This is for buses only.

The hallways have at times become confusing and noisy due to the large number of people waiting (many times with younger children) for school to be dismissed. As a result, valuable learning time has been lost at the latter part of the day. WE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGE YOUR INVOLVEMENT in your children's school and education, but we know that you will agree with us that this will work in the best interest of our children.

Parents that need to pick up children earlier than the end of the day on any occasion are required to report to the school office.

Please do not interrupt the classroom to speak with the teacher until after school has been dismissed. This will enable the teacher to devote her time to your child's class and give them her/his undivided attention. After school is dismissed, the teacher will have an opportunity to talk to you and welcomes your interest. This appropriate time would be after the buses have departed at approximately 3:25 and the teacher will be available until 3:45 p.m.

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

Closed Campus Policy

All students, including high school students, are to remain on campus during their entire school day.

Conduct Before and After School

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

Use of Hallways during Class Time

Loitering or standing in the halls during classes is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Cafeteria Services

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. See the school secretary or the district nutrition office to apply.

Thirty minutes is the length of the lunch period. While students are not required to buy a lunch in the cafeteria, they are encouraged to do so.

In the cafeteria, courtesy and fairness are expected of all students. The same good manners that prevail in a well-mannered home should be observed in the cafeteria.

Do not bring any food into any building to be eaten except in the cafeteria. Students who bring their lunches must eat in the cafeteria. Do not take food or drinks out of the cafeteria.

All campuses of the West ISD are closed campus facilities. Students may not leave the campus for lunch.

Prices for school breakfast will be as follows: PK-8 \$1.25; 9-12 \$1.50; Adult \$2.00

Prices for school lunch will be as follows: PK-8 \$2.25; 9-12 \$2.50; Adult \$3.00

Reduced prices: \$0.30 for breakfast and \$0.40 for lunch.

Other prices: Extra milk or juice, \$0.35.

At WES on Wednesdays ice cream will be available for \$0.85.

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

Parents are reminded that they may only bring lunch for their child. Lunch may not be provided for other students. Lunch for high school students must be left at the attendance window for the student to pick up at the beginning of their lunch period.

Charges:

There will be a limited number of charging for the lunch and breakfast program. Students will not be allowed to charge except in emergency situations. Under no circumstances will students be allowed to charge for a la carte items. After two consecutive emergency charges, they will be served a sandwich and milk. We encourage students to pay for their meals in advance. If a family wishes to pay by the week or month in advance, they may do so to the cashier in the cafeteria. We hope that this will not be an inconvenience to anyone. This policy will not affect the

free/reduced lunch and breakfast program. The school cafeterias are operated for all students and we encourage all students to eat with us since our meals are reasonable and nutritious. There will be no charges allowed during the last week of school.

West Independent School District's Food Service Department provides parents a convenient, easy and secure online prepayment service to deposit money into their child's school meal account at any time. This service also provides parents the ability to view their child's account balance through a web site called MyNutrikids.com (<http://www.mynutrikids.com>). By having money in each child's account prior to entering the cafeteria, we find the lunch lines move along much faster so your child has more time to eat and be with friends.

Also, parents will have the ability to print out a copy of their child's eating history report. This history report will show you all dates and times that your child has purchased a breakfast and or lunch within the past thirty days.

To access these services:

1. Simply go to the district web site at <http://www.westisd.net>.
2. Click on the Food Services link.
3. Click on the MyNutrikids.com link. From this site you will create your account and add money to your child's school meal account. All you need is your child's name, student ID number and school ZIP code. The instructions listed on the back of this page will guide you through the easy online account set up process.

Library

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure.

Students may use the library during the school day by obtaining a pass properly filled out and signed by the teacher who is responsible for them at that particular time. The pass to the library is to be presented upon entering the library to the librarian or one of the assistants and is to be picked up upon leaving the library and returned to the teacher who signed it originally.

All students are encouraged to use the library. Students are to follow the guidelines and standards as set up by the librarian and principal. Any student found to be careless and abusive of library facilities will be restricted from use of the library.

Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups

Student-organized/student-led non-curriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy **FNAB(LOCAL)**. A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

SEARCHES

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

Students' Desks and Lockers

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

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

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by board policy, whether or not a student is present. The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Electronic Devices

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

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

{See policy FNF(LEGAL) for more information.}

Vehicles on Campus

A West High School student who drives a vehicle to school shall park on the school parking lots. All West High School students must register any vehicle they will park on campus when they pre-register for school.

Vehicles are required to have a valid parking permit. Permits will be available to students for \$10.00 per vehicle. In order for a student to purchase a parking sticker they must show proof of a valid driver's license and proof of liability insurance with the student's name on the policy.

To leave campus during the school day, students must have official school approval and must sign out in the office. Truancy referrals and In-School Suspension (as well as absences) will be given for failure to sign-out in the office. Further discipline action will be taken as necessary.

Students are not allowed to sit in/or on parked vehicles. Neither are they allowed to carry on prolonged conversations with visitors in vehicles. Curbside conversations with anyone in a vehicle are strictly prohibited.

All students must ride inside vehicles, and the vehicle must not be overcrowded.

Once a student enters the parking area, he will park his or her vehicle and leave the parking area and come into the school building. Do not loiter in or about the parking areas. Teachers will park in the designated areas. Any student who parks in these reserved areas will be subject to disciplinary action. Students will only park in designated student parking areas.

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the permission of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See also the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

Trained Dogs

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

If contraband of any kind is found, the possessing student shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

The student's parent(s) or guardian shall be notified if any prohibited articles or materials are found in a student's locker, in a student's vehicle parked on school property, or on the student's person, as a result of a search conducted in accordance with this policy.

Students found to be in violation of school policy **FNCF**, (the possession of any intoxicating beverage for consumption, sale, or distribution while on the grounds or in a building of any school in the district or while entering or inside any enclosure, field, or stadium where an athletic event sponsored or participated in by a school in the district is being held constitutes a Class C misdemeanor) shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including removal, suspension, or expulsion.

Drug Testing

For further information, see policy **FNF (LOCAL)**. Also, see **Steroids** in this handbook.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

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

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. Students are encouraged to talk with the counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the junior year.

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

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)

GRADES 3–8

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

Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8

Reading, annually in grades 3–8

Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7

Science in grades 5 and 8

Social Studies in grade 8

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

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

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

END-OF-COURSE (EOC) ASSESSMENTS FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 9–12

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

Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II

English I, English II, and English III

Biology, Chemistry, and Physics

World Geography, World History, and United States History

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

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

In each content area (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies), a student must achieve a cumulative score. To determine whether the student meets the cumulative score, the student's EOC assessment scores in each content area will be added together. If the student's total score on the assessments within the content area is not equal to or greater than the cumulative score set by TEA, the student may retake any of the assessments

in that content area until the student achieves the cumulative score. A student who does not achieve the minimum required score on any individual assessment will be required to retake that assessment.

A student may choose to retake an EOC assessment in situations other than those listed above as well.

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

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

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

Also see **Course Credit** in Section II, **Grading Guidelines** in Section II, and **Graduation** in Section II for additional information.

TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills)

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

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

Also see **Graduation** in Section II for more information.

THEA (Texas Higher Education Assessment)

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

STERIODS

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

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

Students participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing. More information on the UIL testing program may be found on the UIL Web site at

http://www.uil.utexas.edu/athletics/health/steroid_information.html

STUDENT SPEAKERS

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: awards banquets, awards ceremonies, National Honor Society inductions. Students are eligible to introduce these events if they are in the highest two grade levels of the school, volunteer, and are not in a disciplinary placement at the time of the speaking event.

A student who is eligible and wishes to introduce one of the school events listed above should submit his or her name to the principal. As determined by the principal, students who have been selected for special honors, such as captain of an athletic team, student council officers, leaders of school-sponsored organizations, homecoming king or queen, or prom king or queen may also address school audiences at designated events. [See **FNA (LOCAL)**]

SUMMER SCHOOL

High School

All students planning to earn summer school credit must have approval in writing from the principal before enrolling. Summer school will be provided through Education Cooperative of Central Texas Connect Program.

Summer Remediation

Middle School, Intermediate School and Elementary School

Students enrolled in the West Independent School District may be eligible to participate in a summer school program offered by the school district for grades K-8.

Summer school for grades K-8 may be held for the purpose of building skills in one of the core areas of Language Arts, Math, Science, or Social Studies. West Elementary offers classes in math and reading/language arts. Students are allowed to be enrolled in only one course for promotion purposes. Classes will be limited to those students who upon satisfactory completion of the summer program and/or grade level state assessment for grades 3, 5, and 8 will be able to be promoted to the next grade according to the following requirements for advancement or course credit:

In grades 1-5, to be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student shall attain for the year an overall average of 70 or above which is derived by averaging the final numerical grade for language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science or a student shall attain an average of 70 or above in language arts and in mathematics.

In grades 6-8, to be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student shall attain an overall average of 70 or above for the year in all courses taken **or**, students shall attain an average of 70 or above in three of the following subjects: language arts (including reading improvement if it is required to be taken), mathematics, social studies, and science.

Summer school students will be responsible for work that is assigned by the teacher, much of which will be done outside the classroom. The teachers will meet with the students for the four hours each week to monitor the student's progress and to extend individual help. Only one excused absence will be allowed when summer school is an alternative to promotion. All make-up work must be completed.

TAKS (TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)

See Standardized Testing in Section II

TARDINESS

A student who is tardy will be referred to disciplinary consequences. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action, in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

TELEPHONE

Students cannot be called out of classes to the telephone except when the message is especially urgent and the principal has granted permission. Permission to use the telephone in the office can only be granted by the principal or designee.

TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, AND TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

State-approved textbooks are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care at all times. Electronic textbooks and technical equipment may also be provided to students, depending on the course and course objectives. A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technical equipment until the item is returned or paid for by the parent; however, a student will be provided textbooks and equipment for use at school during the school day.

Each teacher will keep an accurate record of items charged to students, and students are personally responsible for all items charged to them.

Each student should write his name, his locker number and the school year in ink on the inside front cover of the textbook.

By state law any item that has been lost, marked, mutilated or defaced in any way must be paid for by the student. In case the item is lost during the semester, it must be paid for before another item can be issued. Replacement

price will be charged for any lost item. This always will be the cost of a new item. Students who withdraw from classes for any reason, moving or change of schedule, must clear their textbook/equipment record with the teacher.

TRANSFERS

See **School Safety Transfers, and Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education Services** in Section II in the handbook for other transfer options.

TRANSCRIPTS

A transcript request form must be completed and a fee of one dollar (\$1.00) will be charged for transcripts made for graduates of West High School. A fee will not be charged for students in high school and graduating seniors, but they must complete a request form.

TRANSPORTATION

School-Sponsored Trips

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

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students residing in the district two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Under some circumstances, such as student safety, the district may permit students who live within two miles of the school to use school transportation. A fee may be charged for this service. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the schools. Further information may be obtained by calling Ron Straten at (254) 826-7528.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop or an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact the district transportation office at (254) 826-7528.

See the *Student Code of Conduct* for provisions regarding transportation to the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP).

Students being transported in school-owned vehicles shall comply with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Any student who fails to comply with that code or established rules of conduct while on school transportation may be denied transportation services and shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Student safety is very important and this is, of course, a primary concern on school buses. Student behavior plays the most significant role in the welfare and safety of students on the buses. In order to ensure the safety of all students on the buses, we need the help of our parents.

If a child's behavior warrants notification to the school principal, the student will meet with the principal and disciplinary action will be taken as necessary. Any reported offense could result in removal from riding the bus.

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

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

When students ride in a district van, bus or any passenger vehicle equipped with seat belts, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

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

TUTORIALS

Tutorial services are provided students of the West ISD on each campus. Students may attend these tutorial classes if they are failing, if they are in need of additional help, and /or if they feel that it would be beneficial to them.

Schedules for the individual campuses will be distributed through the principal’s office.

Parents should have their children take advantage of these programs. To make a child’s education successful, it takes a commitment from the parents to work with the school in seeing that students attend these classes. Parents are reminded of the Grade Requirements for Advancement or Course Credit as stated in the grading policy of this handbook.

VANDALISM

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

Students are responsible for the proper use and care of school property. Defacing or destroying books, furniture, windows or any school property is poor citizenship in action. Students damaging school property will be assessed a sum sufficient to repair or replace what has been damaged and will receive disciplinary action appropriate to the improper citizenship.

Defacement of building and equipment often is the result of improper posting of banners, exhibits, and advertisement materials. Every precaution should be taken by both teachers and students to avoid marring doors, molding, and plastic in any way.

Everyone should take pride in keeping the campus as neat and attractive as is possible, never dropping paper or rubbish anywhere except in a proper receptacle and picking up anything that has been left by a “litter bug”.

VIDEO CAMERAS

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

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

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

General Visitors

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

Raptor, a visitor security system, will be in place in the school office at West High School, West Middle School, West Intermediate School and West Elementary School. Campus visitors must present a valid state- or government-issued photo identification card to the school’s receptionist. Valid forms of identification include a driver’s license, state ID card, concealed handgun license, military ID, Mexico consulate ID and alien registration receipt cards.

The valid ID will be scanned into the V-Soft system and cross-referenced with a database to ensure that the visitor is not a registered sex offender. Once completed, a visitor's badge will be issued. Visitors must sign out when leaving the building. A visitor will need only to present the photo ID on the initial visit at each campus.

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

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

Parents who wish to sit in on sessions of their child's classroom must schedule such visits through the principal and the teacher. The amount of parental involvement in class trips, parties, and other activities is usually a grade level decision and will be covered at the meet the teacher night.

Parents are permitted to occasionally eat lunch with their child. Please notify the office or the child's teacher on or before the morning of your visit.

Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students

The district may invite representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

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

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book and equipment clearance; to the librarian to assure a clear library record; to the cafeteria manager to assert a clear cafeteria accounting; any club sponsor or extra-curricular sponsor for clear fee record; to the clinic for health records; to the counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student and a copy placed in the student's permanent record.

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

GLOSSARY

Accelerated instruction is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level and/or as a result of a student not meeting the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STAAR Linguistically Accommodated (STAAR L) is an alternative state-mandated assessment with linguistic accommodations designed for certain recent immigrant English language learners.

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

Student Code of Conduct is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom or campus. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a disciplinary alternative education program. It 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.

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX I

Options and Requirements For Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties Or Who Need or May Need Special Education

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

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

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

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is:

Contact Person: The Building Principal

Phone Number: West High School – 826-7510
 West Middle School – 826-7520
 West Intermediate School – 826-7530
 West Elementary School – 826-7540

West High School
West Middle School
West Intermediate School
West Elementary School
Brookhaven Youth Ranch
West DAEP/Trojan Connections
Challenge Academy

