

Ezell Independent School District



Student Handbook

2023-2024

Approved: May 8, 2023

Mrs. Lisa Berckenhoff - Superintendent

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Forward

This booklet contains a great deal of required and useful information for our students and parents. Therefore, it cannot be as personal a communication as we would like, and so we address students, not directly as "you" but rather as "the student," "student," or "children." Likewise, the term "the student's parent" may refer to the parent or their legal guardian or a person who has agreed to take responsibility for the student.

The Ezzell Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education or providing access to benefits of education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The following have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:
Superintendent - Lisa Berckenhoff

School Board of Trustees

President	Ted Goranson
Vice-President	Susan Hermes
Secretary	Matt Bible
Member	Henri Mae McCord
Member	Robert Loudon
Member	Courtney Baker
Member	Catherine Steele

Meetings

School Board Meetings are held the Second Monday of month at 6:30 p.m. in the Library at school. Agendas are posted in the glass window of the school entrance and on the school website.

Superintendent

Lisa Berckenhoff

Business Office

Phone: (361) 798-4448

Academic Achievement

Report Card sent at 9 weeks

Asbestos

The Asbestos Management Plan can be reviewed in the Superintendent's office. (See Policy DI)

Assemblies

Students are required to conduct themselves in assemblies and pep rallies as they do in class. Students will be required to sit with their class and not with their family. Students who do not abide by District rules of conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Attendance

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

Compulsory Attendance

State law requires that a student between the ages of 6 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. If a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See policy FEA.]

Students enrolled in 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 diagnostic reading instrument.

A student in grades 3-8 will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur before or after school 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.

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 nine or more days or parts of days within a semester in the same school year, or
Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

For a student younger than 12 years of age, the student's parent could be charged with a criminal offense based on the student's failure to attend school.

If a student age 12 through age 17 violates the compulsory attendance law, both the parent and student could be charged with a criminal offense.

[See policy FEA{LEGAL} in Superintendent's office]

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 policy FEC.]

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

- All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance will be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.

- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.

The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit. The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

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

Official Attendance – Taking Time:

The district must submit attendance of its students to Texas Education Agency {TEA} reflecting attendance at a specific time each day. Official attendance is taken every day [during third period at 9:45 am A student absent for any portion of the day, including at the official attendance-taking time, should follow the procedures below.

Documentation after an Absence

When a student is 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 or is an emancipated minor under state law. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the district reserves the right to require a written note.

Please note that, unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence.

Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than (4) consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school. Otherwise, the student's absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school in order to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused.

[See policy FEC(LOCAL) in Superintendent's Office}]

Makeup Work Because of Absence

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

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

A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold in regards to the state laws surrounding "attendance for credit."

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

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

Tardiness

School begins at 7:50 a.m. A student who is not in the classroom by 8:00 a.m. must be signed in at the office by the parent.

Awards and Honors

Jump Rope for Heart/Hoops for Heart Attendance Awards
Honor Roll All A/ All A & 1B Eighth Grade Honor Students
Presidential Academic Fitness Award
Physical Fitness Award
Spelling Bee Accelerated Reader UIL Competition Valedictorian
Mr. & Miss Mustang
4-H Dynamite Award
Most Improved Girl/Boy Athlete

Bullying

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic methods, or physical conduct against another student on school property, at a school-sponsored or -related activity, or in a district operated vehicle, and the behavior:

Results in harm to the student or the student's property,
Places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or of damage to the student's property, or
Is so severe, persistent, and pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

This conduct is considered bullying if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator(s) and the student victim and if it interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.

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

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate

disciplinary action. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. The district will also contact the parents of the victim and of the student who was found to have engaged in the bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited. Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district. The parent of a student who has been determined by the district to be a victim of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's website, and is included at the end of this Handbook in the form of an appendix. Procedures related to reporting allegations of bullying may also be found on the district's website.

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

Cafeteria

The District participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers free and reduced-price lunches based on a student's financial need. Information can be obtained from the Superintendent's office. To ensure Ezzell ISD fulfills the requirements of the NSLP, students may not share food brought in from the outside with other students in the cafeteria.

Breakfast	\$1.00
Reduced Breakfast	\$0.00
Lunch	\$3.40
Reduced Lunch	\$0.40
Staff & Visitors Breakfast	\$2.25
Staff & Visitors Lunch	\$4.25
Extra milk, juice, entree	\$0.50
A La Carte	\$1.00
Ice Cream	\$1.50
Tea	\$1.00

Serving time for breakfast begins at 7:20 a.m. and ends at 7:50 a.m.. Students have until 7:55 a.m. to finish eating. If you wish for your child to eat breakfast, please ensure he/she is here before 7:50 a.m.

All breakfasts and lunches must be prepaid. Charging is strongly discouraged. No charging will be allowed past \$10. If charges are not paid, the student will receive a cheese sandwich and milk until charges are paid in full.

Campus Hours

Ezzell's campus hours are from 7:50 AM to 4:00 PM for elementary, junior high and high school. 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.

Cell Phone/Telephone Use

K-8 students are expected to turn in cell phones at the beginning of the day. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers. The use of mobile telephones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event. If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. The [student's parent or guardian] may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15. Multiple offensive offenses will result in extended periods of confiscation. The 2nd offense will be kept for a week. The 3rd offense will result in the phone being kept for the remainder of the semester. 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. 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. Students will be allowed to use the office phone after asking permission from the office staff. High school students may retain possession of their phones; however, they are not to be visible in common areas such as hallways, cafeteria, restrooms, etc. Classroom use will be at the discretion of the teacher.

Conferences

Teachers have a conference every day. Please check with your child's teacher as to when her conference has been set as it could change from year to year.

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

In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus principal. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

Computer Access-Acceptable Use and Code of Conduct

Only students who have been authorized by the District and who are under direct supervision of designated District employees are permitted to use a District computer or to access any local network or outside tele-communications services such as TENET or the Internet.

Prior to such authorization, the student and the student's parent must sign and return the District Acceptable Use Form acknowledging their responsibilities and the consequences of violation.

In today's educational settings, the use of technology is vitally important, however the safety of our students is the prime concern. Unauthorized use of the internet or technology will result in the student losing the privilege of connecting and using technology during the remainder of the semester. Exceptions would be online classes or teacher monitored required usage.

Conduct

Refer to the Code of Conduct Manual

Counseling

Academic Counseling

Students are encouraged to talk with the teachers and the superintendent in order to learn about the curriculum, course offerings, and graduation requirements and differences between graduation requirements.

Personal Counseling

Students who wish to discuss academic or personal concerns with a counselor should see the superintendent.

Discipline

Students who violate the District's Student Code of Conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. (Please refer to the Student Code of Conduct Handbook)

Disruptions

The District may pursue a criminal charge against and/or discipline any person inciting, promoting, or participating in a protest demonstration, disruption, riot, sit-in, walk-out, blocking of entrances, etc. Written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory material may not be sold, circulated, or distributed on any school campus without the approval of the superintendent. Violators shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Dress Code

Dress and Grooming

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

Shirts

No halter tops, spaghetti straps, tube tops, one shoulder tops, off the shoulder tops, no graphic shirts that promote drugs or alcohol, obscene language, gang affiliated apparel, transparent tops, tight fitting, low neckline, inappropriate innuendo, or no tops cut longer than the armpit. Appropriate tops, that are loose and long enough to cover jeans, shorts, or skirts. Sleeveless shirts may be worn if the sleeve is hemmed and fits snugly under the arm and covers all undergarments. Fabric between the neck and top of the arm must be no less than the width of an index card.

Bottoms

No oversized, baggy, overly tight, and free of holes above the knees. Space between garments such as skirts and shorts must come within the width of an index card above the knee. No tight fitting shorts or spandex/bike shorts. They are to be hemmed and or have a finished cuff. Pajama bottoms or lounge pants are not allowed. Leggings may be worn, however; they must have a shirt that reaches mid-thigh over the leggings to be deemed appropriate.

Dresses/Skirts

Must touch the top of the knee or come within the width of an index card above the knee. Strapless, off one

shoulder, off the shoulder, halter, or spaghetti strap dresses will not be allowed unless covered appropriately at all times.

Undergarments

Proper undergarments must be worn under all clothing including mesh or see thru shirts. Tights or leggings as an undergarment are acceptable only if the accompanying skirt or garment meets the required criteria.

Shoes

The wearing of shoes is mandatory. Tennis shoes are required for P.E. participation. No house shoes, hee-lies, flip flops, or shoes with metal taps, or cleats will be permitted. All footwear must have a back.

Other

No sunglasses, hats, caps, and other forms of headgear are allowed in the building. Hoods are not to be worn inside the building. Hats, caps, and other forms of headgear are prohibited on campus during the school day for students. Earrings are not to be worn by male students. All other piercings are prohibited including tongue, belly, or facial.

Hair

Must be neatly trimmed, combed, and kept out of the eyes. No rollers, tinsel, or feathers are allowed in hair. Only natural hair colors are permitted. Extreme hair styles are not acceptable. Students must be clean shaven.

If the principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student will be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day, until the problem is corrected, or until a parent or designee brings an acceptable change of clothing to the school. Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Drill - Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergency Drills

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.

Electronic Devices and Technology Resources

Misuse of Technology Resources and the Internet

Students shall not:

- Violate policies, rules, or agreements signed by the student or the student's parent regarding the use of technology resources.
- Attempt to access or circumvent passwords or other security-related information of the district, students, or employees or upload or create computer viruses, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the education environment.
- Attempt to alter, destroy, or disable district technology resources including but not limited to computers and related equipment, district data, the data of others, or other networks connected to the district's system, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Use the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten district students, employees, or volunteers. Including, on the bus and off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Send, post, or possess electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening,

harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal, including cyber bullying and "sexting," either on the bus or on or off school property, if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

- Use email or Web sites to engage in or encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- See acceptable use policy for specific information.

Emergency Closing Information

Shall be done by phone, school website, Remind and the following radio stations: www.ezellisd.org
99.9 FM (Hallettsville, 798-4333)
94.3 FM (Hallettsville, 798-4333)

Emergency Medical Treatment

Parents shall complete an emergency care form each year that includes a place for parental consent for school officials to request medical treatment for the student, as provided by law. Parents shall also be asked to supply other information that could be required in case of emergency; parents should update this information as often as necessary.

Extracurricular Activities

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.

Participation in some of these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. When the district arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions to this may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor.

Students shall be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities, subject to the following restrictions.

During the initial nine-week period of the school year, students shall have been promoted into the next grade level or must have accumulated the required number of units toward graduation. {See the PROMOTION section in this handbook or the Superintendent for further information on promotion.

During subsequent nine-week period, students who receive a nine-week grade below 70 in any course or subject or handicapped students who fail to meet the standards in their Individual Education Plan {IEP} may not participate in extracurricular activities. However, students may regain eligibility after the next three-school week evaluation period if they are passing all courses at that three-school week period. The suspension from extracurricular activities goes into effect seven days after the last day of the nine week period during which the grade lower than 70 was earned. Students shall be allowed to participate at the end of any six-week period in which the student earns a course average of 70 or more.

Students are permitted up to 10 absences from a class during full year course in order to participate in school related or school-sanctioned activities on or off campus. Any absence resulting from a student's participation in an organization not on the approved list shall be considered unexcused.

Fees

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided without charge to students. Students are expected to provide their own supply of pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- The materials for a class project the student will keep.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntary purchases of pictures, publications, etc.
- Student accident insurance and insurance on school-owned instruments.
- Fees for damaged library books and school-owned equipment, including school apparel. 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 Superintendent.

Fund Raising

An application for permission must be made to the superintendent's office at least 30 days before the event. Except as approved by the Board of Trustees, fundraising shall not take place on school property.

Gang Free Zone

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.

Grading Policy

The District shall establish instructional objectives that relate to the TEKS for grade level subjects or courses. These objectives shall address the skills needed for successful performance in the next grade or next course in a sequence of courses.

Assignments, tests, projects, classroom activities, and other instructional activities shall be designed so that the student performance indicates the level of mastery of the designated District objectives. The student's mastery level shall be a major factor in determining the grade for a subject or course. The overall average for the six weeks will be calculated as follows: Junior High - 60% test grades and 40% homework grades. Grades 2-4 - 50% test grades and 50% homework grades.

Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate from the District's school, students must successfully complete a certain number of courses as required by TEA.

Handicapped students may be permitted to graduate with ARD committee recommendation under the provisions of their IEP and with the consent of the ARD committee and their parents.

Gum

Gum is not permitted on school grounds or buses. Failure to comply with this will result in disciplinary action and/or reduction in the conduct grade.

Health Related Matters

Student Illness

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she won't be attending that day. It is important to remember that schools must exclude students with certain illnesses from school for periods of time as identified in state rules. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. In addition, students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea free without diarrhea-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours. A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school nurse.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. If the nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent. The district is also required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions.

Contact the school office if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether or not your child should stay home.

Bacterial Meningitis

State law requires the district to provide information about bacterial meningitis:

- 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 common and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

- 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 2 years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. 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. They are spread when people exchange respiratory or throat secretions (such as by kissing, coughing, or sneezing).

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

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It's a good idea not to share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis.* The vaccines are safe and effective (85–90 percent). They 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>.

* Please note that the TDSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination between grades 7 and 10, and state guidelines recommend this vaccination be administered between age 11 and 12, with a booster dose at 16 years of age. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information.

Also refer to **Immunizations** on page 16 for more information.

Food Allergies

The district requests to be notified when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially those allergies that could result in dangerous or possibly life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic, as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, which addresses employee training, dealing with common food allergens, and specific strategies for dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies. When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment.

Head Lice

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones. Because lice spreads so easily, the district will need to exclude any student found to have live lice until after one treatment of an FDA-approved shampoo or cream rinse, which can be purchased from a drugstore or grocery store.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent and inform the parent that the child will need to be picked up from school and will need to stay home until after an initial treatment is applied. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return.

More information on head lice can be obtained from the TDSHS Web site at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm>.

Immunization

All students must be immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical or religious reasons, the student is not to be immunized.

The immunizations required are: Diphtheria/tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella; the school nurse can provide information on the required doses of these vaccines. Proof of immunization may be personal records by a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or a rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate, signed by a licensed physician, stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required would be harmful to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long contraindication.

If a student's religious beliefs conflict with the requirement that the student be immunized, the student must present a statement signed by the student (or by the parent if the student is a minor) that states that the immunization conflicts with the beliefs and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the student is an adherent or member.

This statement should be renewed yearly.

Leaving Campus

Please remember that student attendance is crucial to learning. We ask that appointments be scheduled outside of school hours as much as reasonably possible. Also note, that picking up a child early on a regular basis results in missed opportunities for learning. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

State rules require that parental consent be obtained before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day. The district has put the following procedures in place in order to document parental consent:

- A parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. High School students that have their own transportation can be released with a parent phone call. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student

returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.

- If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse or district personnel will contact the student's parent. Under no circumstances will a child in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied by a parent or adult authorized by the parent.

Library

Using the library is a privilege. Students will have the opportunity to check out books and will be responsible for upkeep of the book and returning it on time. If a book is lost or damaged, the student will be required to pay the cost of the book. If a library book is not returned by the due date, a \$.05 fee/day will be assessed.

Lockers

Lockers remain under the jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student. The school reserves the right to inspect all lockers. A student has full responsibility for the security of the locker and is responsible for making certain it is locked and that the combination is not available to others. Locker combinations/extra keys must be given to the home room teacher. Searches of lockers may be conducted at any time if there is reasonable cause to do so whether or not a student is present.

Medicine at School

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

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

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

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

Parental Involvement and Responsibilities

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school, a partnership that thrives on communication. The school asks parents to:

- Sign and return to the school the written statement that the parent had read, understands and consents to the responsibilities outlined in the Student/Parent Handbook. Parents with questions are encouraged to contact the superintendent.
- Encourage their child(ren) to put a high priority on education and to commit themselves to making the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Stay informed on school activities and issues via the school website and P.T.O. meetings.
- Become a school volunteer. For further information, contact the superintendent.
- Participate in campus parent organizations. The activities are varied, ranging from extracurricular, to the campus committee formulating campus performance objectives fostering improved educational opportunities for all students. For further information, contact the superintendent.
- Monitor their children's progress and contact teachers as needed.

Conference may be arranged by calling the school at (361) 798-4448.

Parties and Socials

The rules of good conduct and grooming shall be observed for schools' athletic, academic, and social events. Guests will be expected to observe the same rules as students attending the event; the person inviting the guest will share responsibility for conduct of the guest. Students attending a party or social event may be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the party; anyone leaving before the official end of the party will not be readmitted.

Pesticides

The district is required to follow integrated pest management (IPM) procedures to control pests on school grounds. Although the district strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non chemical control measures, pesticide use is sometimes necessary to maintain adequate pest control and ensure a safe, pest-free school environment.

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who have further questions or who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Mrs. Lisa Berckenhoff, the district's IPM coordinator, at 361-798-4448.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism consists of using 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 shall be subject to disciplinary action, which may include an academic penalty such as a zero for the work in question.

Posters

Signs and posters that students wish to display must first be approved by the classroom teacher. Poster displayed without authorization will be removed.

Any student who posts printed material without approval shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Printed Material

School-sponsored newspapers and/or yearbooks are under the complete supervision of the teacher and the Superintendent.

All written material over which the District does not exercise editorial control that is intended for distribution to students shall be submitted to the superintendent for review and approval. If the material is not approved within 24 hours of the time that it was submitted, it must be considered disapproved.

Disapprovals may be appealed by submitting the disapproved material to the Superintendent; material not approved by the Superintendent within three days is considered disapproved.

This disapproval may be appealed to the Board at its next regular meeting when the student shall have a reasonable period of time to present his or her viewpoint.

Promotion, Retention, and Placement In Grades 1-8

Students shall be promoted from one grade to the next on the basis of academic achievement.

In grades 1-4, 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, a grade of 70 or above in reading and mathematics, and a grade of 70 or above in two of the following subjects: language arts (English and spelling), science, and social studies.

Middle school students (grades 5-8) must have an overall average of 70 or above as well as an average of 70 or above in at least three of the following subjects: language arts (including reading improvements, if required), mathematics, social studies, and science. If a student's grade average in any subject or course is "borderline", or below 70 at the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, the student's parents shall be notified. (Special Note: Students must pass reading with 70 to receive credit for language arts.)

Students in grade 5-8 who are not promoted shall be retained in the same grade or placed in an alternative education program. No student shall be retained more than once in grades 5-8 unless the parents, teacher, and superintendent agree that the student should be retained a second time because of some special circumstances. No student shall be retained more than once in grades 1-4 unless the parents, teacher, and school administrator agree that the student should be retained a second time because of some special circumstances.

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.

Report Cards

Written reports of student's grades and absences shall be issued to parents at least once every nine weeks. At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be notified if the student's grade average is near or below 70. If a student receives a nine-weeks grade of less than 70 in any class or subject, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. The report card shall state whether tutorials are required or only recommended for a student who receives a grade below 70 in a class or subject.

Report cards must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within 3 days.

Safety/Accident Insurance

Student safety on campus or at school-related events is a high priority of the District. With safety in mind, the District has implemented policies and committed resources. However, the District can address only part of the challenge; the essential remaining part is the cooperation of students, including:

- Avoiding conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Following the code of conduct and any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the superintendent or teachers
- Remaining alert to and promptly reporting safety hazards, such as intruders on campus
- Knowing emergency evacuation routes and signals
- Following immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other District employees who are seeing to the welfare of students.

Parents can assist by keeping emergency care information up to date (Name of doctor, emergency phone number, allergies to medications, etc.). Please contact the School Secretary or School Nurse to update any information. Having current information will be of critical importance should an accident or injury occur that requires medical attention.

The District is not responsible for medical costs associated with a student's injury. The District does make available, however, an optional, low-cost student accident insurance program to assist parents in meeting medical expenses. A parent who desires coverage for his/her child will be responsible for paying insurance premiums and for submitting claims through the Superintendent's office.

School Buses

BUS RIDING IS A PRIVILEGE. FAILURE TO ABIDE BY ALL RULES MAY RESULT IN THE LOSS OF BUS RIDING PRIVILEGES.

Rules are established for the safety of the students being transported. It is important that the driver be able to pay full attention to the operation of the bus. Misconduct can create a serious safety hazard. Rules and regulations will be strictly enforced.

The driver is in charge of the bus and he/she must be obeyed when instructions are given. The driver will report violations of the rules to the Superintendent. The Superintendent has the authority to suspend on a temporary or permanent basis any student who refuses to obey the rules.

The rules are as follows:

1. Students must never stand in the roadway while waiting for the bus. They should wait a sufficient distance from the pavement to allow the bus to come to a safe stop.
2. Students must remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion.

3. Students are expected to wait in orderly lines, following the instruction of the supervising personnel before boarding the bus.
4. Students must board and leave the bus carefully and courteously without shoving or pushing.
5. Students shall not extend their arms, head, or any other part of their body out of the bus window; nor shall they extend clothing or other articles through the bus window.
6. Throwing articles within the bus or out of the windows at any time will not be condoned.
7. Excessive noise {loud talking, screaming, whistling, etc.) by students will not be tolerated.
8. Harmful or dangerous articles (explosives, fireworks, matches, cigarettes, lighters, knives, etc.) are prohibited.
9. Fighting at bus stops or on the bus is forbidden and could result in suspension.
10. Students shall not write upon, disfigure, or cause damage to any part of the inside or outside of the bus. Students are to take care of the bus; if not, damage will be charged to the offender, and as a minimum, with loss of bus riding privileges until damage is paid.
11. Bus riders shall behave in such a manner as to not jeopardize the safe operation of the bus.
12. The use of profane, vulgar, or other unacceptable language or gestures will not be tolerated.
13. The use of electronic devices to capture inappropriate images (still shots or videos) will not be tolerated.
14. Riders are to be picked up and let off at designated stops only. If the rider misses the bus, he/she may meet the bus at the next designated spot.
15. Appropriate behavior while waiting for the bus or departing from the bus will be expected and demanded of each student.
16. The use of tobacco or tobacco products is prohibited.
17. Littering is prohibited.
18. Any other misconduct, which may distract the driver from safe operation of the bus, will not be tolerated.
- 19. No food, drinks, or gum will be allowed on the bus.**

The following procedures shall be followed when a discipline concern arises on the bus serving a regular route or an extracurricular activity:

1. The driver shall attempt to correct the misbehavior of the passenger.
2. If the driver is unable to resolve the problem, the administrative staff shall be notified immediately, or if the

incident occurs in the afternoon, not later than the morning of the next school day.

3. The administrative staff shall investigate the incident and notify the driver of the action taken.
4. A conference involving the administrative staff, the student passenger, the driver, and parent(s) may be required.
5. The administrative staff may suspend the student's bus riding privileges. If such a suspension occurs, the parents shall be notified prior to the time the suspension takes effect.
6. In the case of serious misconduct that endangers the safety of other passengers or the driver, the driver shall have the authority to put the student off the bus or to call for law enforcement assistance; the administrative staff and parents shall be notified of the situation as soon as possible. The student shall not be provided bus service again until a conference involving all persons listed above has been held.

Disciplinary sanctions and changes in transportation for a handicapped student shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Loss or restriction of bus privileges

First Bus Report:

The student will have a conference with the principal, or designee, and /or other disciplinary action may be taken. The student will retain bus privileges contingent upon not receiving another bus report.

The parent will be notified of the offense, through conference, or other disciplinary action. ***

Second Bus Report:

If the student receives a second bus report within the same semester, (or within a short space of time), he/she may lose bus privileges for up to ten days. ***

Third Bus Report:

The student may lose bus privileges for the remainder of the semester. After returning to the bus in the second semester, if the student receives another bus report he/she may lose bus privileges for the remainder of the school year. In each instance the parents will be notified. ***

***In the event of initiation and/or participation in a major offense, a student may lose bus privileges for an undetermined length of time. ***

Sexual Harassment

The District believes that every student has the right to attend District school and school related activities free from all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. The District considers sexual harassment of students to be serious and will consider the full range of disciplinary options, up to and including expulsion, according to the nature of the offense.

All students are expected to treat one another courteously, with respect for the other person's feelings; to avoid any

behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop these behaviors when asked or told to stop. All students are prohibited from engaging in offensive verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed toward another student. This prohibition applies whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other intimidating sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors; that the other student regards as offensive or provocative.

Students and/or parents are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with the teacher, or superintendent, who serves as the District's Title IX coordinator for students.

A student and/or parent in a conference may present a complaint alleging sexual harassment by another student or sexual harassment or sexual abuse by a staff member with the superintendent or designee or the Title IX coordinator. A person who is the same gender as the student ordinarily will hold the first conference with the student. The conference will be scheduled and held as soon as possible within five days of the request. The superintendent or Title IX coordinator will conduct an appropriate investigation, which ordinarily will be completed within 10 days. The student or parent will be informed if extenuating circumstances delay completion of the investigation.

The student will not be required to present a complaint to a person who is the subject of the complaint.

If the resolution of the complaint is not satisfactory to the student or parent, the student or parent within 10 days may request a conference with the superintendent or designee by following the procedure set out in Board policy FNO (LOCAL). If the resolution by the Superintendent or designee is not satisfactory, the student or parent may present the complaint to the Board as provided by policy.

Smoking

Students shall not smoke, vape, or use tobacco products on school property or at any school-related or school-sanction activity, on or off school property, as provided by state law. Per state law, any student found using or in possession of a vape will be subject to a 45 day DAEP placement.

Special Programs

The District provides special programs for special education, Title I, gifted and talented, and ESL/bilingual students. Students or parents with questions about these programs should contact the Superintendent to answer questions about eligibility requirements and programs and services offered in the District.

For more information please see the Addendum for Special Education on our website, www.ezellisd.org

Student Complaints

Students or parents who have a complaint should first bring the matter up with the teacher. If not satisfied at that level, they can request a conference with the Superintendent and, ultimately, appear before the Board, in accordance with the Board policy 22.

Students and/or parents who have a complaint regarding possible discrimination on the basis of sex should contact the Superintendent.

Complaints or concerns regarding handicapped students of the District's program for handicapped students should be brought to the Superintendent's attention.

Student Records

A student's school records are private and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the District until the student withdraws or graduates. The record moves with the student from school to school.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is a minor or a dependent for tax purposes, as do students who are 18 years of age or older. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating their rights.

The Superintendent 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 reviewed during the regular school hours. The records custodians or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

Parents of a minor or of a student who is dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and the school officials with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student's records.

School officials include any employees, agents, or Trustees of the District, Cooperatives, or contractual placement facilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

- Working with the student.
- Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or a handicapped student's individual education plan (IEP);
- Compiling statistical data; or
- Investigating or evaluating programs.

Certain other officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. The District forwards a student's records without prior consent on request to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

Parental consent is required to release the records to anyone else. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The parent's or student's right to access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher and records on ex-students, do not have to be made available to the parent or student.

Students over 18 and parents of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights.

If the District refuses the request to amend the records, the requestor has the right to a hearing and to place in the student's record a statement commenting on the information. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, parents and students are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course through this process.

Parents or students have the right to file a complaint with the Superintendent if they feel that the District is not in compliance with the law regarding student's records.

Copies of the student records are available at a cost of 5 cents per page, payable in advance. Parents may be denied copies of a student's records:

1. after the student reaches age 18 and is no longer a dependent for tax purposes;
2. when the student is attending an institution of post-secondary education;
3. if the parent fails to follow proper procedures and pay the copying charge. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, upon written request of the parent, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge.

Certain information about District students is considered directory information. This information will be released to anyone requesting it, unless the parent objects in writing to the Superintendent within ten days after the issuance of this notice. Directory information includes: a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school, most recent previous school attended, and other similar information.

Textbooks

State-approved textbooks, electronic textbooks, technological equipment, and other instructional materials are provided free of charge for each subject or class; students are required to use these items carefully. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher; students who are issued a damaged book should report that fact to the teacher. Any student failing to return these items in acceptable condition shall lose the right to free textbooks and equipment until the book is returned or paid for by the parent or guardian.

Tutorial

Tutorials will be arranged with the classroom teacher.

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school.

The school reserves the right to search any vehicle if reasonable cause exists to do so. Searches of vehicles may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the presence of the driver (owner).

Parking Lots

Students will park in designated student parking spaces. Parking in other areas could result in the student losing parking privileges. Loitering in parking lots before or after school is not permitted and could result in disciplinary action.

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 main office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, all parents and other visitors should be prepared to show identification.

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. Even if the visit is approved prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must check in at the main office and sign in.