



Student-Parent Handbook Elementary/Secondary Summary of Changes 2023-2024

- **House Bill 1605**, passed by the Texas Legislature shortly before the start of the 2023-2024 school year, requires the district to make instructional materials available for parent review no later than 30 days before the school year begins and for at least 30 days after the school year ends. The district is waiting on TEA and State Board of Education guidance regarding this bill. If a parent or guardian has any questions regarding instructional materials they should contact the campus principal. Tests that have not yet been administered will not be made available for parent examination.
- **Senate Bill 2124** requires districts “as soon as practicable after September 1, 2023, to develop an advanced mathematics program for middle-school students that is designed to enable those students to enroll in Algebra I in grade 8.” This will not be reflected in this year’s handbook but will be required for next year’s handbook.
- A parent may request that the district conduct an instructional material review in math, English Language Arts, science, or social studies class in which the parent’s student is enrolled to determine alignment with state standards and the level of rigor for the grade level. The district is not required to conduct an instructional material review for a specific subject area or grade level at a specific campus more than once per school year.
- To provide educational stability, the district will provide enrollment and registration assistance, as well as other educational services throughout the student’s enrollment, to any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care).
- The district will allow a student to be absent for up to two days during the student’s junior year and two days during the student’s senior year for a career investigation day to visit a professional at that individual’s workplace to determine the student’s interest in pursuing a career in the professional’s field, provided the student verifies these activities to the district. **(Secondary)**

- The district will integrate into instruction research-based content designed to reduce bullying that is appropriate for students' age groups.
 - Students in elementary grades will participate in:
 - Instruction designed so that students can recognize bullying behaviors and how to report them
 - Age-appropriate discussions that encourage peers to intervene when they observe bullying occur
 - Instruction that characterizes bullying as a behavior that results from the student's need to acquire more mature social or coping skills, not an unchangeable trait

- The district will use an age-appropriate survey regarding school culture that includes relevant questions on bullying to identify and address student concerns. Each campus has a committee that addresses bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives. The committee will include parents and secondary students. For more information on this committee, including interest in serving on the committee, contact the campus principal.

- **House Bill 4363** - As required by law, the district will provide written notice concerning the following:
 - Automatic college admission
 - Curriculum requirements for financial aid
 - Benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid
 - The Texas First Early High School Completion Program requires a student to provide an official copy of assessment results and transcripts, as applicable, to receive credit for the assessment and credits required for early graduation under the program (**new**)
 - The Texas First Scholarship Program (**new**)
 - The Future Texas Teachers Scholarship Program (**new**)

- **House Bill 8** - Under the Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) program, a student may be eligible to enroll at no cost to the student in dual credit courses at a participating institution of higher education. The FAST program allows students who are or have been educationally disadvantaged at any time during the four years preceding the student's enrollment in a dual credit course to enroll at no cost to the student. The district will determine eligibility upon the student's enrollment in the dual credit course. See the high school counselor for more information.

- **Senate Bill 1893** - In accordance with state law, the district prohibits the installation or use of TikTok or any successor application or service on a district device, along with any other social media application or service determined by the governor.

- The term “English Learner” changed to “Emergent Bilingual Students”
- Language was added to both the student handbook and athletics handbook regarding access to records about football helmet reconditioning:

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

- **Senate Bill 29** - Removed “A parent should contact the school nurse if a student has been diagnosed with COVID-19.”
- **Senate Bill 37** - Revises existing law to add a peace officer or law enforcement agency to the list of officials to whom a person should report a hazing event. The report does not have to be in writing.
- An elementary or secondary student may possess and self-apply sunscreen to avoid overexposure to the sun. An elementary student’s teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to the student’s exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and asks for help applying it. If a secondary student needs assistance with sunscreen application, please address the need with the school nurse.
- **Senate Bill 629** - Requires districts to adopt a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of opioid antagonists at each campus that serves grades 6-12. There will be a policy update to come for FFAC(LOCAL) that will help determine how we will handle this new requirement. **(Secondary)**
- Updated brief description of programs used for mental health support:

Stephenville ISD provides a comprehensive network of coordinated programs and interventions supporting the health, well-being, and academic success of all students. Stephenville ISD’s professional staff facilitates a wide range of programs and activities designed to address fundamental social, emotional, interpersonal, and physiological barriers on a child’s educational path. Universal and targeted interventions are provided to meet these primary needs of students, thereby maximizing their potential for greater academic success.

- **House Bill 3803** - A parent may request in writing that a student repeat prekindergarten, kindergarten, or any grade in grades 1-8. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.
- **House Bill 3803** - A parent may request in writing that a student repeats a high-school credit course in which the student was enrolled during the previous school year unless the district determines that the student has met all requirements for graduation. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.
- **House Bill 4375** - The district will offer instruction in CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) at least once to students enrolled in grades 7-12. The

instruction can be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR or AED certification.

- Added information required by the USDA for participation in the National School Lunch Program
- Some of the sections regarding serving students in foster care or that are experiencing homelessness shifted to different sections and/or the language was altered.
- A parent or teacher may request that a STAAR or EOC be administered to a student in paper format. The district may grant this request for any single administration for up to three percent of the number of students enrolled in the district. Requests will be granted in the order in which they are received. Requests for paper format for a fall administration of a STAAR or EOC must be submitted no later than September 15 each school year. Requests for paper format for a spring administration of a STAAR or EOC must be submitted no later than December 1 each school year.
- Under the “General Visitors” section, language was added to increase the specificity of guidelines and expectations for visitors to campus. These include:
 - Request entry to the school at the primary entrance unless otherwise directed by a district employee, be prepared to show identification, exit the school at the primary entrance, and leave all exterior doors closed, latched, and locked unless actively monitored by a district employee
- Accelerated Learning Committee (ALC) was removed from the Glossary. These are no longer a requirement.
- Slight changes in cell phone verbiage:
 - The district permits students to possess personal cell phones for safety purposes; however, these devices must **remain turned off, put away, and out of sight** during the instructional day (**Elementary**)
 - The district permits students to possess personal cell phones for safety purposes; however, these devices must remain **put away and out of sight** during the instructional day (**Secondary**)
 - In both handbooks, the language “turned into the principal’s office” was changed to “the front office” to better align with common practice.