Parent and Student Rights and Responsibilities 2026 - 2027 Grades K - 12

Desert Sands Unified School District publishes this Handbook for Parents and Students annually to present information that may be useful to parents and students and to comply with state and federal laws regarding notification to parents and students of their educational rights.

Included in this handbook:

Informational Directory
- Desert Sands Unified School District Board of Education
- Desert Sands Unified School District Administration
- Desert Sands Unified School District Schools

Referenced Codes and Policies relating to important information regarding parent and student rights. This information should be read carefully.
- California Education Code
- Code of Federal Regulations
- Desert Sands Unified School District
  - Board Policies
  - Administrative Regulations
- Health and Safety Code
- Public Law
- United States Code

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any information contained in the Handbook, please contact the principal at your child's school.

Tenemos un Manual en español si lo prefiere.

DESERT SANDS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
47-950 Dune Palms Road • La Quinta, California 92253 • (760) 777-4200 • FAX: (760) 771-8505
BOARD OF EDUCATION: Humberto Alvarez, Michael Duran, Tricia Pearce, Linda Porras, Dr. Kailee Watson
SUPERINTENDENT: Kelly May-Vollmar, Ed.D.

Dear Educational Community,

Welcome to the Desert Sands Unified School District. You are a valued member of a district dedicated to the vision of successfully preparing all students for college, career, and life. Representing approximately 26,000 students, almost 5,000 employees, and a 752 square mile attendance zone, the Desert Sands Unified School District proudly serves the communities of Bermuda Dunes, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, Indio, La Quinta, and parts of Rancho Mirage and Coachella.

The district's vision, mission, and values statements serve as an anchor for how each of us will listen, learn, and lead as we work collaboratively to ensure the very best educational experiences and outcomes for every student of DSUSD. Our mission, vision, and values statements are located on the subsequent page.

Please review this handbook to get better acquainted with our student and parent rights and responsibilities, and to better set the stage for a successful school year. We understand that in addition to your review of this document, ongoing communication is vital to the achievement of all of our collective goals. Please refer to our district website and the district mobile app for frequently updated district information. We also encourage you to locate your individual school information on their website and talk with your school about access to the ParentVue app allowing for up to date information on how your child is doing in school.

We value our students and our families and we look forward to working together with you during a school year where we grow stronger TOGETHER!

Sincerely,

Kelly May-Vollmar, Ed.D.
Superintendent, DSUSD

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EQUITY AND ACCESS

Nondiscrimination in Curriculum and Instruction

The State of California and DSUSD are committed to providing all students with equal rights and opportunities in educational programs and activities, regardless of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law, consistent with EC sections 200 and 220, as further clarified and strengthened by Assembly Bill 715 (2025). DSUSD is committed to maintaining safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environments free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Discrimination on the basis of any protected characteristic, as defined in these statutes, is prohibited in all programs and activities. (Additional Information on Assembly Bill 715, effective January 1, 2026).

Consistent with state and federal law, discrimination may include conduct based on religion, ancestry, ethnicity, or national origin. This includes antisemitism and other forms of bias directed toward individuals or groups based on shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics. Such conduct will be addressed with the same seriousness as all forms of unlawful discrimination. DSUSD shall establish and maintain clear procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving complaints of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Complaints may be filed under DSUSD's Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP).

Instructional Materials

The Governing Board shall adopt or approve:

- Textbooks, instructional materials, supplemental materials, professional development resources, and curriculum that are aligned to the content standards adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) and consistent with the content and cycles of the curriculum framework adopted by SBE in addition to EC 220 and ensure that all students are free from unlawful discrimination.
- Professional development materials and services that support lawful, inclusive instructional practices and that do not promote, endorse, or otherwise promote the use of any textbook, instructional material, supplemental instructional material, or curriculum that would subject a student to unlawful discrimination as specified in EC 220.

If the Board knows or has reason to know that such materials or services were used or an action occurred that would violate EC 220, the Board will investigate and remediate the action, which may include, but is not limited to, the implementation of restorative justice practices. Regardless, a complaint may be filed by staff, district residents, or the parents/guardians of students enrolled in a district school under DSUSD's Uniform Complaint Procedures, or it may be directly filed with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI), as described below.

Additionally, the Board shall ensure that adopted instructional materials do not contain matter reflecting adversely upon persons on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation, or because of a characteristic listed in EC 220, or that violates EC 243, 244, 51500, or 60044. However, the Board does not prohibit the continued use of an appropriately adopted textbook, instructional material, or curriculum on the basis that it contains inclusive and diverse perspectives, including those in compliance with EC 51204.5, 51933, 51934, and 60040.

Instruction & School-Sponsored Activities

No instruction or school-sponsored activity may promote a discriminatory bias on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation, or a characteristic specified in EC 220. Teacher instruction must be factually accurate and aligned with the adopted curriculum and standards, and be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility, rather than advocacy, personal opinion, bias, or partisanship. Discriminatory bias in instruction and school-sponsored activities does not require a showing of direct harm to members of a protected group, and members of a protected group do not need to be present while the discriminatory bias is occurring for the act to be considered discriminatory bias. Corrective action will be taken if the Board finds the instruction or school-sponsored activities to be discriminatory.

Parents may review the instructional materials used; access will be provided within a reasonable amount of time in accordance with EC 49091.10 and the California Public Records Act.

Office of Civil Rights

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR), under the administration of the California Government Operations Agency (hereafter, "Agency"), has been established with the purpose of working directly with local educational agencies (LEA) to prevent and address discrimination and bias as specified in EC 220. OCR will do all of the following, in consultation with CDE:

- Provide education and educational resources to identify and prevent antisemitism and other forms of discrimination and bias, and share relevant laws and regulations with educational state agencies, LEAs, and community stakeholders.
- Annually submit a report to the Agency, the SSPI, the executive director of the state board, and the Legislature on the state of discrimination and bias in all LEAs serving TK-12 students. The report will include specific information on the type of discrimination or bias against a group protected by EC 220 and made publicly available on the Agency's website.
- Recommend strategies to combat discrimination or bias against groups protected by EC 220 in LEAs serving TK-12 students to CDE and LEAs, including proactive strategies using a restorative justice approach with a focus on repairing harm, fostering empathy, and healing relationships.
- Annually review CDE's report that includes a summary of all complaints made under the UCP that involve discrimination as defined in EC 220, with specific information on the type of discrimination or bias, any action taken by CDE in response to each complaint and the timeline for that action, and the disposition of each complaint.
- Advise on subsequent action regarding UCP complaints that involve discrimination as defined in EC 220.
- Provide assistance, in consultation with the office of the Attorney General and CDE, on proper protocols to respond to discrimination complaints filed under the UCP.
- The Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, appointed by the Governor, supports statewide efforts to prevent and respond to antisemitism in educational settings, including advising LEAs and engaging with community stakeholders.

All reports produced at the state level will protect individual privacy and comply with confidentiality requirements.

Married, Pregnant, and Parenting Students

Pregnant and parenting students are entitled to accommodations that provide them with the opportunity to succeed academically while protecting their health and the health of their children. State law provides the following accommodations as rights of pregnant and parenting students:

1. Eight weeks of parental leave, which the student may take before the birth of the student's infant if there is a medical necessity and after childbirth during the school year in which the birth takes place in order to protect the health of the student who gives or expects to give birth and the infant, and to allow the pregnant or parenting student to care for and bond with the infant.
    a. Students should notify the school of their intent to exercise this right.
    b. No student will be required to take all or part of the parental leave.
    c. If deemed medically necessary, the student may receive more than eight weeks of parental leave.
    d. The supervisor of attendance will ensure that the student's absences are excused until the student is able to return to school.
    e. During parental leave, the student will not be required to complete academic work or other school requirements.
    f. The student may return to the school and the course of study in which the student was enrolled before taking parental leave.
    g. Upon return to school after taking parental leave, the student is entitled to opportunities to make up work missed during the leave, including, but not limited to, makeup work plans and reenrollment in courses.
    h. A student who chooses not to return to the school in which the student was enrolled before taking parental leave is entitled to alternative education options.
2. No requirement to participate in pregnant minor programs or alternative education programs. However, a student may be required to obtain the certification of a physician or nurse practitioner that the student is physically and emotionally able to continue participation in the regular education program or activity. Students who voluntarily participate in alternative education programs will be given educational programs, activities, and courses equal to those they would have been in if participating in the regular education program.
3. Treatment of pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, and related conditions or recovery in the same manner and under the same policies as any other temporary disabling condition.
4. Reasonable accommodations to a lactating student on a school campus to express breast milk, breastfeed an infant child, or address other needs related to breast-feeding. Reasonable accommodations include, but are not limited to, all of the following:
    a. Access to a private and secure room, other than a restroom, to express breast milk or breastfeed an infant child.
    b. Permission to bring onto a school campus a breast pump and any other equipment used to express breast milk.
    c. Access to a power source for a breast pump or any other equipment used to express breast milk.

d. Access to a place to store expressed breast milk safely.

e. A reasonable amount of time to accommodate the student's need to express breast milk or breastfeed an infant child.

5. Have absences from school excused when the absence is due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of the student's child, including absences to care for a sick child, for which the school will not require a note from a doctor.

6. Continued enrollment for a fifth year in the school the student was previously enrolled in order for the student to complete the Board-adopted high school graduation requirements, unless the school makes a finding that the student is reasonably able to complete such requirements in time to graduate from high school by the end of the student's fourth year of high school.

Desert Sands Unified School District will not apply any rule concerning a student's actual or potential parental, family, or marital status that treats students differently on the basis of sex. Desert Sands Unified School District will also not exclude or deny any student from any educational program or activity including class or extracurricular activity, solely on the basis of the student's actual or potential pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or related conditions or recovery.

A student will not incur an academic penalty as a result of the student's use of the accommodations listed above and must be provided the opportunity to make up any work missed due to the use of reasonable accommodations to express breast milk or breastfeed an infant child. A complaint of noncompliance may be filed under the uniform complaint procedures.

(BP5146, AR 5146)

Response to Immigration

All children have the right to a free public education, regardless of immigration status or religious beliefs. The California Attorney General has issued the guidance document, "Promoting a Safe and Secure Learning Environment for All: Guidance and Model Policies to Assist California's K–12 Schools in Responding to Immigration Issues," which includes the following "Know Your Educational Rights" information for students and parents:

Your child has the right to a free public education

All children have a right to equal access to free public education, regardless of their or their parents'/guardians' immigration status.

All children in California:

- Have the right to a free public education.
- Must be enrolled in school if they are between 6 and 18 years old, unless otherwise exempt.
- Have the right to attend safe, secure, and peaceful schools.
- Have a right to be in a public school learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence, and intimidation.
- Have equal opportunity to participate in any program or activity offered by the school without discrimination.

Desert Sands Unified School District has developed procedures to ensure the safety and security of all students, staff, and families in the event that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials are present at school sites. These procedures are aligned with guidance issued by the California

Attorney General. Desert Sands Unified School District's plan is available on the DSUSD website at www.dsusd.us.

Information required for school enrollment

Schools must accept a variety of documents from the student's parent or guardian to demonstrate proof of child's age or residency and schools are not required to keep a copy of the document used as proof of a child's age.

Information about citizenship/immigration status is never required for school enrollment. A Social Security number is never needed for school enrollment.

Confidentiality of personal information

Federal and state laws protect student education records and personal information. These laws generally require that schools get written consent from parents or guardians before releasing student information, unless the release of information is for educational purposes, is already public, or is in response to a court order or subpoena.

Some schools collect and provide publicly basic student "directory information." If so, the school district must provide parents or guardians with written notice of the directory information policy, and provide the option to refuse release of your child's information.

Family safety plans if you are detained or deported

You can update your child's emergency contact information, including secondary contacts, to identify a trusted adult guardian who can care for your child if you are detained or deported.

You can complete a Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit or a Petition for Appointment of Temporary Guardian of the Person to give a trusted adult the authority to make educational and medical decisions for your child.

Right to file a complaint

Your child has the right to report a hate crime or file a complaint to the district if your child is discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, or bullied on the basis of their actual or perceived nationality, ethnicity, or immigration status.

For more information on resources for responding to immigration enforcement activities at California schools, or to file a complaint, please contact: Bureau of Children's Justice, California Attorney General's Office, P.O. Box 944255, Sacramento, CA 94244-2550, (800) 952-5225, BCJ@doj.ca.gov, https://oag.ca.gov/bcj/complaint.

(BP 1445, AR 1445)

Rights of Foster Youth

Under California EC, a foster child (also referred to as foster youth) is defined as any of the following:

1. A child removed from their home under Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 309.
2. A child who is the subject of a petition filed under WIC 300 or 602, whether or not removal has occurred.
3. A dependent child of a tribal court under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization, consistent with tribal law.
4. A child who is the subject of a voluntary placement agreement as defined in WIC 11400(p).

Foster youth have specific educational rights designed to support stability and academic success. These include:

1. Foster youth have the right to remain in the school of origin, which is the school attended when first entering foster care, the school most recently attended, or any school attended within the past 15 months. If a dispute arises, the student has the right to remain in the school of origin while the dispute is resolved.
2. Foster youth must be enrolled immediately, even without typically required documents for enrollment (*e.g.,* proof of residency, birth certificate, immunizations, transcripts), required clothing (such as uniforms), or payment of outstanding fees, fines, or unreturned items.
3. The foster youth's educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker must be notified of expulsion or disciplinary proceedings, including manifestation determination reviews for students with disabilities, before a change in placement occurs.
4. A foster youth's grades may not be lowered due to absences resulting from verified court appearances, court-ordered activities, or placement changes. Grades must reflect the student's performance as of the date they left the school.
5. Foster youth have the right to receive full and partial credits for coursework completed and to have those credits accepted by the new school.
6. Foster youth have priority access to intersession programs. If the student moves during intersession, the educational rights holder determines which program the student will attend.
7. Alleged violations of foster youth education rights may be addressed through the District's Uniform Complaint Procedures.

For the standardized statewide notice of these rights, visit https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/fy/fyedrights.asp. For assistance, contact the District's Foster Youth Liaison, Francesca Camarena at 760-238-9835 (Francesca.Camarena@desertsands.us). (BP 6173.1, AR 6173.1)

Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, all school-aged children and youth experiencing homelessness are entitled to the same free, appropriate public education as permanently housed students. A student is considered experiencing homelessness if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. To identify eligible students, the district administers a housing questionnaire annually, which can be provided in the parents' or youth's primary language upon request. This includes children and youth who:

- Share housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or shelters
- Live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus/train stations, or similar places
- Have a nighttime residence not designed for or ordinarily used for sleeping
- Are migratory and living in the above circumstances
- Are unaccompanied youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian

Summary of rights for students experiencing homelessness

1. Students may attend either the school of origin or their current school of residence and will not be required to attend a separate school for homeless children. The school of origin may be the school attended when last permanently housed, the school most recently attended, or any school attended in the last 15 months.

2. Transportation may be provided at the request of the parent/guardian if a determination is made that it is the barrier to regular school attendance.
3. Disputes must be resolved promptly, and the student may remain in the school of origin during resolution.
4. Students have the right to immediate enrollment, even without typically required documents for enrollment (*e.g.,* proof of residency, birth certificate, immunizations, transcripts), required clothing (*e.g.,* uniforms), or payment of outstanding fees, fines, or unreturned items.
5. Students experiencing homelessness automatically qualify for free school meals.
6. Schools must issue and accept full and partial credits for coursework completed.
7. Students have priority access to intersession programs. If the student moves, the educational rights holder determines which program the student attends.
8. Students may not be stigmatized or segregated based on their housing status.
9. Alleged violations of McKinney-Vento may be addressed through the District's Uniform Complaint Procedures.

Unaccompanied youth who meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness are entitled to all rights and services listed above. An unaccompanied youth is a minor not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian.

The District's Homeless Youth Liaison is Francesca Camarena, who may be contacted at 760-238-9835 (Francesca.Camarena@desertsands.us). Notices of the rights of students experiencing homelessness and available community resources are posted on the District's and school websites.

(BP 6173, AR 6173)

Safe Place to Learn Act

DSUSD is committed to maintaining a safe, welcoming environment where all students have equal access to academic and extracurricular programs. DSUSD prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on any actual or perceived protected characteristic, as well as association with anyone who has such characteristics. This policy applies to conduct on campus, at school activities, and off-campus behavior that creates a hostile environment at school. It also applies to all acts of the Governing Board or Superintendent in enacting policies and procedures that govern DSUSD.

Retaliation against anyone who reports or participates in a complaint, files or participates in the filing of a complaint, or investigates, participates, or refuses to participate in the investigation of a complaint is strictly prohibited. All reports will be thoroughly investigated, and DSUSD will take prompt action to prevent misconduct, address its recurrence, and mitigate its effects. Students who experience or witness discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying should contact the Resolution and Compliance Officer, principal, or any staff member. Students and parents may also meet with the Resolution and Compliance Officer to discuss concerns or accommodations.

All staff must intervene when safe to do so. Students who engage in prohibited conduct may face disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. DSUSD policies are available at **(**BP 5131.2, AR 51131.2, BP 5145.3, AR 5145.3**).** Reports may be reported anonymously at **(**Say Something**)**

To access statewide resources for students and families, visit the California Department of Education's bullying prevention webpage: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyingprev.asp.

Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Desert Sands Unified School District provides a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students regardless of the nature or severity of their disability to guarantee equal access to all programs, services, and activities.

A student may qualify for Section 504 protections if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Desert Sands Unified School District is responsible for identifying, evaluating, and, if eligible, providing accommodations and support to students with disabilities through a Section 504 Plan, ensuring equal educational opportunities as provided to their non-disabled peers.

Parents/guardians, staff, or others may refer a student for a Section 504 evaluation. If a student is found eligible, the team will develop a written Section 504 plan outlining the necessary accommodations and supplementary aids and services to ensure that the student receives FAPE. For additional information about the rights of parents of eligible students, or questions regarding the identification, evaluation, and eligibility of Section 504 protections, please contact the District's Section 504 Coordinator Al Bennett, Child Welfare and Attendance Director at Alpercy.BennettJr@desertsands.us

(BP 6164.6, AR 6164.6)

Sexual Harassment

DSUSD is committed to maintaining a school environment that is safe, supportive, and free from all forms of harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and discrimination. Sexual harassment targeting students is prohibited at school and during all school-sponsored or school-related activities. Retaliation against any person who reports, files a complaint, testifies about, assists with, or otherwise supports a complainant in alleging sexual harassment, or otherwise participates or refuses to participate in the complaint process is also strictly prohibited.

Students who believe they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment, or an act of sexual violence should report the incident immediately to any trusted school employee, including a teacher, principal, or the District's Title IX Coordinator. Parents/guardians may also make reports on a student's behalf.

All school personnel are required to report any known or suspected sexual harassment of a student to the Title IX Coordinator within one (1) school day, even if the student does not file a formal complaint or requests confidentiality.

DSUSD will investigate every report of sexual harassment involving students, regardless of whether it meets formal criteria under Title IX or is addressed through other procedures, including the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP). DSUSD will take prompt and appropriate actions to prevent harassment, implement remedies, and provide supportive measures.

Any student who engages in sexual harassment or sexual violence at school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension and/or expulsion for students in grades 4–12. Employees who engage in sexual harassment or sexual violence toward a student will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, as provided by law and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

DSUSD has adopted a written policy on student sexual harassment in compliance with state and federal law, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy applies to all students and is included in this annual notification. A copy of the complete policy is:

- Provided to all students and families at the beginning of each school year;
- Distributed as part of any orientation program for new and continuing students;
- Posted in a prominent location at each school site, including the central administrative office and areas where rules and procedures are posted;
- For high schools: Displayed in every bathroom and locker room on campuses serving grades 9–12;
- Available for staff at the beginning of each school year and upon hiring.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and means sexual harassment and other harassment on the basis of one, or a combination of two or more protected characteristics, which include, but may not be limited to, sex; gender; gender identity; gender expression; sexual orientation; sex stereotypes; pregnancy, false pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or related conditions or recovery; and parental, marital, and family status.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature made against a student in the educational setting when:

1. Submission to conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a condition of a student's academic status or progress;
2. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for academic or other school-related decisions impacting the student;
3. The conduct has the purpose of hurting the student's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment;
4. Submission to or rejection of the conduct by the student is used as the basis for any decision regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available through a district program or activity.

Conduct that occurs off campus or outside the scope of school-related or school-sponsored activities may still constitute a violation of DSUSD's policy if it creates a hostile school environment or has a continuing negative impact on a student while at school. In such cases, DSUSD will take appropriate action to address the behavior and its effects on the educational environment.

To apply the Title IX complaint procedures, sexual harassment is defined as conduct that occurs in the context of an education program or activity in which DSUSD exercises substantial control over both the respondent (the accused individual) and the context in which the alleged harassment occurred. Title IX sexual harassment includes:

1. A DSUSD employee conditioning access to the District aid, benefit, or service on a student's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would determine to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a student equal access to the District's education program or activity;
3. Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking as defined under federal law (20 USC 1092; 34 USC 12291).

Examples of Sexual Harassment

Examples of sexual harassment may include:

- Unwanted sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or advances
- Sexual slurs or epithets
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects or images
- Spreading sexual rumors
- Physical acts like touching, grabbing, or blocking movement
- Unwelcome electronic communications of a sexual nature

DSUSD's Title IX Coordinator Designee is Dr. Lisa McColl, Resolution and Compliance Officer, 760-771-8788, lisa.mccoll@desertsands.us. To review the full board policy and administrative regulations regarding sexual harassment, please visit: **(**BP 5145.7 AR 5145.7**).**

Special Education

Desert Sands Unified School District identifies, locates, and evaluates individuals from birth through age 21 who may have disabilities and require special education services. Parents, teachers, and qualified professionals may refer a student for evaluation by contacting Jason Mills Senior Director of Special Education at jason.mills@desertsands.us.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a "child with a disability" includes individuals with intellectual disabilities; hearing or vision impairments; speech or language impairments; emotional disturbance; orthopedic impairments; autism; traumatic brain injury; other health impairments; or specific learning disabilities who need special education and related services.

Desert Sands Unified School District provides eligible students with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in accordance with state and federal law, including for students in private schools, those experiencing homelessness, wards of the state, and highly mobile students.

Services are designed to meet the unique needs of each student. If a student is found eligible, a team of educational professionals and the parent(s) or guardian(s) develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP), which outlines the services and supports the District will provide.

Students with Disabilities and Special Education

Students learn in a variety of ways with most students learning effectively in a traditional school setting. Students with disabilities may be eligible to receive special education services. These services are based on assessments and determined by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the student's parent(s) as equal participants. Special education services are designed to meet the unique educational needs of students with disabilities and are provided at no cost to parents. To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are to be educated with their nondisabled peers in the general education environment at the school they would attend if nondisabled. The general education classroom with all appropriate supplementary aids and services where the student has the greatest opportunity to be integrated with their nondisabled peers is the first educational setting for an IEP team to consider. An IEP team should only remove a student from the general education classroom and environment when the nature or severity of a student's disability is such that education in general classes with the use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Parents of school-age children who suspect their child may have a disability and may need special education services should contact the administrator of their neighborhood public school. Parents of non-enrolled preschool-age children who suspect their child may have a disability and may be eligible for special education services should contact Adams Early Childhood Learning Center at (760) 777-4260.

Further information concerning special education programs and services provided, you may request the Riverside County Special Education Local Plan Area Notice of Procedural Safeguards and Parents' Rights, which can be obtained at any school site or by contacting the Special Education office at (760) 771-8652.

Students With Disabilities Under Section 504 Of The Rehabilitation Act Of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying in any form toward individuals on the basis of their actual or perceived disability is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The District will promptly investigate any complaints of disability-based discrimination, harassment, intimidation and/or bullying, and take reasonable actions to stop future incidents.

The District has specific responsibilities related to the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to school age individuals with disabilities under Section 504. The District has a responsibility to identify, evaluate, and if eligible, provide pupils with disabilities the same opportunity to benefit from educational programs, services and activities as provided to their non-disabled peers. To qualify for Section 504 protections, the pupil must have a mental or physical impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Students who meet this the federal definition of persons with disabilities under Section 504, a Section 504 Plan may be developed which indicates the accommodations, supplementary aids and/or services that will be provided to assist the student in accessing the general education program. Section 504 must provide nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities in a manner that ensures that individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate. Parents or guardians must be notified in writing of any District decisions regarding the evaluation, identification, and/or educational placement of their student and their right to participate in and/or appeal these decisions under Section 504.

For further information about Section 504 and/or assistance in filing an appeal, complaint or to conduct an informal mediation or impartial hearing regarding Section 504, contact the District's Section 504 Coordinator Al Bennett Director of Child Welfare and Attendance at alpercy.bennettjr@desertsands.us.

Inspection Of Special Education Records

Upon request, parents or guardians of children with exceptional needs may examine and receive copies of the student's records within five business days after a request is received and prior to any Individualized Education Program meeting, hearing or resolutions session regarding their child. (EC 56043(N))

Nondiscrimination Policy

Discrimination in education programs is prohibited by state and federal law. EC 200 et seq. requires school district to afford all pupils regardless of gender, gender identity, gender expression, sex, race, color, religion, natural origin, ethnic group identification, immigration status, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or the perception of one or more of such characteristics, equal rights and opportunities in accessing educational programs, activities and facilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. The District assures that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission or participation in district programs. Complaints of unlawful discrimination are investigated through the Uniform Complaint Procedure. Such complaints must be filed no later than

six months after knowledge of the alleged discrimination was first obtained. Questions or concerns regarding these rights or allegations of discrimination based on disability should be directed to Jason Mills, Senior Director of Special Education.

Special Education Complaints

Parents or guardians have a right to file a written complaint with the school if they believe the school is in violation of federal or state law governing the identification or placement of special education students, or similar issues. Procedures are available from your building principal. (EC 56500.2)

Special Education Due Process Hearings

Parents or guardians have the right to file a request with the Office of Administrative Hearings to initiate a due process hearing relating to special education rights. (EC 56502)

Student Fees

Students shall not be required to pay any fee, deposit, or charge to participate in an educational activity that is a fundamental part of DSUSD's curricular or extracurricular program. DSUSD will provide, at no cost, all books, materials, equipment, supplies, and other resources necessary for full participation in the educational program.

The Governing Board may impose fees, deposits, or other charges only when expressly authorized by law. When considering waivers or exceptions, the Board will evaluate relevant factors, including the socioeconomic needs of students' families and their ability to pay. DSUSD and its schools may request voluntary donations and conduct fundraising activities; however, students shall not receive or be denied course credit, privileges, or participation in educational activities based on their involvement in donations or fundraising efforts. No student shall be subjected to any form of discrimination for choosing not to participate.

Complaints regarding the unlawful imposition of fees, deposits, or other charges will be addressed through DSUSD's Uniform Complaint Procedures. If a complaint is found to have merit, the Superintendent or designee will recommend, and the Board will implement appropriate remedies for all affected students and families pursuant to 5 CCR 4600. (BP 3260)

Title IX: Sex Equity in Education Act

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is one of several federal and state anti-discrimination laws that ensure equality in educational programs and activities that receive federal funding. Specifically, Title IX protects students, employees, applicants for admission and employment, and other persons from all forms of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment. California law further provides that all students (as well as other persons) are protected – regardless of their sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, race, or national origin – in all aspects of DSUSD's educational programs and activities. It also provides that students may not be discriminated against based on their parental, family, or marital status, and pregnant and parenting students may not be excluded from participating in any educational program, including extracurricular activities, for which they qualify. The essence of Title IX is to ensure that students (as well as other persons) are not excluded, separated, denied benefits to, or otherwise treated differently on the basis of sex unless expressly authorized to do so under state or federal law in areas including, but not limited to: recruitment, admissions, and counseling; financial assistance; athletics; sex-based harassment; treatment of pregnant and parenting students; discipline; single-sex education; and employment.

Under Title IX, students have the right to:

1. Fair and equitable treatment that is free from discrimination based on sex.
2. Be provided with an equitable opportunity to participate in all academic extracurricular activities, including athletics.
3. Inquire of the school's athletic director as to the athletic opportunities offered by the school.
4. Apply for athletic scholarships.
5. Receive equitable treatment and benefits in the provision of all the following: equipment and supplies; scheduling of games and practices; transportation and daily allowances; access to tutoring; coaching; locker rooms; practice and competitive facilities; medical and training facilities and services; and publicity.
6. Access to a gender equity coordinator to answer questions regarding gender equity laws.
7. Contact the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) to access information on gender equity laws.
8. File a confidential discrimination complaint with the United States Office of Civil Rights (OCR) or CDE if there is belief that discrimination, or unequal treatment, on the basis of sex has occurred.
9. Pursue civil remedies as a result of discrimination.
10. Be protected against retaliation for filing a discrimination complaint.

DSUSD has designated the following personnel to address questions and complaints regarding its nondiscrimination policies specific to Title IX: Dr. Lisa McColl, Resolution and Compliance Officer, 47-950 Dunes Palms Rd.. La Quinta, CA 92253, lisa.mccoll@desertsands.us, 761-771-8788 . Any complaint alleging noncompliance with Title IX will be investigated and resolved through the Uniform Complaint Procedures. For more information regarding Title IX and its application, please visit **(**Title IX Complaint Procedures**)**, or contact the Title IX Coordinator and/or the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education. Additional resources can be found at:

United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights
Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1100
Telephone: (800) 421-3481
Fax: (202) 453-6012
TDD: (800) 877-8339
Email: OCR@ed.gov
OCR Complaint Form: https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html

California Department of Education
Office of Equal Opportunity
1430 N Street, Room 4206
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone: (916) 445-9174
Fax: (916) 324-9818
Email: oeoinfo@cde.ca.gov
Complaint Procedures: https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/di/eo/complaint.asp

California Interscholastic Federation
4658 Duckhorn Drive
Sacramento, CA 95834

Telephone: (916) 239-4477
Fax: (916) 239-4478
Website on Equity: https://www.cifstate.org/governance/equity/index

Uniform Complaint Procedures

DSUSD is primarily responsible for compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, including those related to unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying against any protected group, and all programs and activities that are subject to the uniform complaint procedures (UCP). The UCP is used to investigate and resolve complaints regarding the following programs and activities:

- Accommodations for Pregnant and Parenting Students
- Adult Education Programs
- After School Education and Safety
- Agricultural Career Technical Education
- Career Technical and Technical Education and Career Technical and Technical Training Programs
- Child Care and Development Programs
- Compensatory Education
- Consolidated Categorical Aid Programs
- Course Periods without Educational Content
- Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying in district programs and activities against any protected group as identified under EC 200 and EC 220 and GC 11135, including any actual or perceived characteristic as set forth in PC 422.55, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, in any program or activity conducted by an educational institution, as defined in EC 210.3, that is funded directly by, or that receives or benefits from, any state financial assistance.
- Educational and graduation requirements for students in foster care, students who are homeless, students from military families, students formerly in a Juvenile Court School, students who are migratory, and newcomer students.

  Note: A standardized notice, which includes the complaint process information, with educational and graduation requirements (EC 48645.7, 48853, 48853.5, 49069.5, 51225.1, 51225.2) for such students is posted Child Welfare and Attendance.
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Instructional Materials and Curriculum: Diversity
- Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP)
- Migrant Child Education
- Physical Education Instructional Minutes

- Reasonable Accommodations to a Lactating Student
- Regional Occupational Centers and Programs
- School or Athletic Team Names, Mascots, or Nicknames
- School Plans for Student Achievement
- School-site Councils
- State Preschool
- State Preschool Health and Safety Issues in LEAs Exempt from Licensing

  Note: A notice is posted in each California state preschool program classroom in each school to identify appropriate subjects of state preschool health and safety issues, notifying parents, guardians, students, and teachers of (1) the health and safety requirements under Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations that apply to California state preschool programs pursuant to HSC 1596.7925, and (2) the location to obtain a complaint form.

- Student Fees

  Note: No student enrolled in a public school shall be required to pay a student fee for participation in an educational activity.

- Any other state or federal educational program the State Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee deems appropriate

Complaints within the scope of the UCP are to be filed with the designated compliance officer who is knowledgeable about the laws and programs that they are assigned to investigate. However, a complaint related to student fees may be initially filed with the principal or the Superintendent or designee.

UCP complaints must be filed no later than one year from the date the alleged violation occurred.

A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying must be initiated no later than six months from the date that the alleged unlawful discrimination occurred, or six months from the date that the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged unlawful discrimination. The time for filing may be extended for up to 90 days by the Superintendent or designee for good cause upon written request by the complainant setting forth the reasons for the extension.

DSUSD's decision will be provided to the complainant through an investigation report within 60 calendar days of receiving the complaint, unless this time period is extended by written agreement of the complainant. A complainant may appeal the DSUSD's investigation report to the CDE by filing a written appeal within 30 calendar days after receiving the District's decision. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the originally filed complaint and a copy of the investigation report for that complaint. A complainant may also pursue civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders that may be available under state or federal discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying laws, if applicable.

The District's UCP policy and regulations are posted in all schools and offices, including staff lounges and student government meeting rooms. Written notification of DSUSD's UCP is provided annually to students and their parents, employees, district and school advisory committee members, appropriate private school officials, and other interested parties. Copies of the UCP process are also

available free of charge. To obtain a copy of the complaint form and review additional UCP-related information, go to **(**Uniform Complaint Procedure**)**.

DSUSD's UCP Compliance Officer is: Dr. Lisa McColl, Resolution and Compliance Officer, Personnel Services, 47-950 Dune Palms Rd., La Quinta, CA 92253, 760-771-8788, lisa.mccoll@desertsands.us.

Williams Complaint

Students must have sufficient textbooks and instructional materials in good, usable condition. Each student, including English learners, must be provided a textbook and/or instructional materials for use in class and to take home or use after school. School facilities must be clean, safe, and maintained in good repair, ensuring they do not pose an emergency or urgent threat to the health or safety of students or staff. Classes must be staffed by appropriately assigned and credentialed teachers. This means there should be no teacher vacancies or misassignments.

- Misassignment: The placement of a certificated employee in a position for which they lack the proper credentials or authorization.
- Teacher vacancy: A position for which a single certificated employee has not been assigned at the beginning of the school year (or semester for one-semester courses) to serve for the full term.

Concerns regarding insufficient instructional materials, unsafe or unmaintained facilities, teacher vacancies, or misassignments may be submitted through the DSUSD Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures. Complaint forms are available at the school office and at this link: Williams Uniform Complaint. While individuals are not required to use DSUSD's form or identify themselves, only complainants who provide their name and contact information will receive a written response. Complaints may be filed with the school principal or designee. Parents, students, and community members are encouraged to share concerns directly with the school principal prior to submitting a formal complaint to allow for timely resolution. (AR 1312.4)

ENROLLMENT

District of Choice

California's District of Choice (DOC) program allows students to transfer to participating school districts outside of their district of residence. A DOC establishes the number of incoming transfers it will accept each year and must admit students through a non-discriminatory, unbiased process. Selection cannot be based on a student's academic or athletic performance, physical condition, English language proficiency, personal characteristics (such as race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation), or family income. However, a DOC may use established entrance criteria for specialized programs or schools, provided that these criteria are applied uniformly to all applicants.

If the number of applications exceeds available spaces, the DOC is required to conduct a random public drawing in the office of Child Welfare and Attendance, following the granting of priority enrollment to students in the following order:

1. Siblings of students already enrolled in the DOC;
2. Students with parent employees at site/within Desert Sands Unified School District

Applications must be submitted to the desired DOC by February 28 of the year prior to entry of the school year before the requested transfer year. Applicants will receive written notification by May 31, indicating whether their application was provisionally accepted, denied, or placed on a waiting list. Vacancies may be filled from the waiting list through May 31. Once approved, the student is considered to have met residency requirements for the DOC. Transfers under this program are valid for one school year and will be automatically renewed unless the DOC governing board votes to discontinue participation in the program.

Participation in the DOC program is voluntary for school districts, and those electing to participate must register with the California Department of Education (CDE). A list of currently participating districts can be found on the CDE website: https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/dc/. For details regarding application procedures, timelines, selection processes, and possible reasons for denial, please refer to the website of the individual District of Choice.

Intradistrict Transfers

Students who reside within the attendance boundaries of Desert Sands Unified School District are generally assigned to a school based on established geographic boundaries. Students who live in the attendance area of a school must be given priority to attend that school over students who do not live in the school's attendance area. However, the District recognizes that the diverse interests, needs, and life circumstances of students and families may call for enrollment at a different school within the District. To support educational access and family choice, several intradistrict transfer options are available.

While academic and athletic performance are not considered in general admission decisions, academic criteria may be used for specialized programs or schools when uniformly applied to all applicants. The District may also adopt a school selection policy that takes into consideration special circumstances that might be harmful or dangerous to a particular student, whether the student's sibling is already in attendance at the school, and/or whether the student's parent/guardian is employed at the school. Additionally, please note that intradistrict transfers may affect a student's eligibility to participate in CIF-sanctioned athletic competitions, particularly at the high school level.

Once a student is approved for intradistrict transfer, reapplication is not required annually. However, the placement may be subject to displacement if the school experiences excessive enrollment.

Permit applications are available at www.k12transfers.com. Parents will receive written notification indicating if the request has been approved, denied, or if their student has been waitlisted. In cases of denial, the written notice will include the reason for the decision. To appeal the decision of a transfer denial, you may email your appeal to jacqueline.dominguez@desertsands.us or drop off your handwritten appeal directly at 47-950 Dune Palms Rd La Quinta, CA 92253.

Transfers for Victims of Bullying (EC 46600(d))
If a student is determined to be a victim of bullying, the District will approve a transfer request to another school within the District unless the requested school has reached capacity. If no other district school offers the appropriate grade level, the student may pursue an interdistrict transfer, which the District of residence may not deny if the receiving district approves the application. (For more information about interdistrict transfers in bullying cases, please refer to the section titled "Interdistrict Permit Transfer.")

To qualify under this provision, the following conditions must be met:

1. The incident meets the definition of bullying under EC 48900(r).

2. Another student in the District committed the bullying.
3. A written complaint was submitted to the school, the District, or a law enforcement agency.
4. An investigation was conducted in accordance with District policy and EC 234.1.

Transfers for Victims of a Violent Criminal Offense (20 USC 7912)
Any student who is determined to be a victim of a violent criminal offense while on school grounds has the right to transfer to another school within the District. The District has 14 calendar days to determine eligibility and offer a transfer placement. In evaluating such cases, the Superintendent or designee will consider the circumstances of the incident, consult with law enforcement as appropriate, and take into account the needs and preferences of the student and parent. Once a parent accepts the offer, the transfer will be completed as quickly as possible. Examples of violent criminal offenses include, but are not limited to: attempted murder, battery causing serious bodily injury, assault with a deadly weapon, rape, sexual battery, robbery, extortion, and hate crimes.

Transfers from a Persistently Dangerous School (20 USC 7912; 5 CCR 1192)
If a school is designated by the California Department of Education as persistently dangerous, the District will notify parents within 10 calendar days and provide a list of alternate schools at least 14 calendar days before the new school year begins. Parents may request a transfer by submitting a written request and listing their ranked school preferences. While the District will make every effort to honor parent preferences, assignments are based on space availability and other educational considerations. If a parent declines the placement, the student may remain at their current school. Transfers from persistently dangerous schools remain in effect for as long as the school retains its designation, although the District may choose to make the transfer permanent depending on the student's needs.

Interdistrict Transfer Permit

Parents who wish to enroll their child in a school outside the family's district of residence must first secure an interdistrict transfer permit, which must be approved by both the district where they live and the district they hope to attend. Desert Sands Unified School District considers permit requests for the specific reasons set forth in Board Policy 5117, Interdistrict Attendance, such as access to specialized programs, alignment with a parent's workplace, or the desire for continuity when siblings are already enrolled. The district evaluates each application without any obligation to provide transportation, unless transportation is otherwise required by law. Importantly, the district of residence may not block the transfer of a student whose parent is on active military duty if the receiving district agrees to enroll the student, nor may the district deny a qualified request from a student who has been verified as a victim of bullying when no intradistrict alternative is available. Upon the parent's request, the district must provide transportation assistance if the family qualifies for free or reduced-price meals and the student is a victim of bullying or the child of an active-duty military parent.

Families may submit the Interdistrict Permit Application online at www.k12transfers.com. Applications for the current school year are accepted year-round, while requests for the following year become available on December 4. For current-year requests, those filed within 15 calendar days of the school year's start, the Desert Sands Unified School District will render a final decision within 30 calendar days of receipt. For all future-year requests received earlier than that window, the district has until 14 calendar days after the new school year begins to approve or deny the transfer. Written notice of the decision will be provided to parents. If a request is denied, the letter will explain

the reasons and outline the right to appeal to the Riverside County Board of Education within 30 calendar days.

Once granted, an interdistrict permit satisfies residency requirements for one school year and shall be renewed annually. The Desert Sands Unified School District may revoke a permit if the student's attendance, behavior, or academic performance becomes unsatisfactory; however, state law prohibits districts from rescinding a permit after June 30 following completion of grade 10, or at any time in grades 11 or 12. For complete details on eligibility criteria, required documentation, timelines, and appeal procedures, families should consult the district's Board Policy BP 5117/AR 5117**,** or contact the office of Child Welfare and Attendance, (760) 771-8612, CWA@desertsands.us for assistance.

Involuntary Transfer

A student may be transferred to another school within the District if the student has been convicted of a violent felony, as defined in Penal Code 667.5(c), or of a misdemeanor listed in Penal Code 29805, and is currently enrolled at the same school as the victim of the crime for which the conviction was made.

Prior to any transfer decision, the student's parent/guardian will be notified of the proposed action and informed of their right to request a meeting with the school principal or designee to discuss the matter. The Governing Board will make the final determination regarding the transfer, based on the recommendation of the principal and/or the Superintendent or designee. This decision will consider the safety and well-being of all students involved. (BP 5116.2)

Meeting Residency Requirements for Attendance

A student is considered to have met the residency requirements of Desert Sands Unified School District if any of the following conditions apply:

- The student's parent/legal guardian resides within the boundaries of the District. Evidence of residency may be established by documentation showing the name and address of the parent/guardian within the district, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
  1. Property tax payment receipt
  2. Rental property contract, lease, or payment receipt
  3. Utility service contract, statement, or payment receipt
  4. Pay stub
  5. Voter registration
  6. Correspondence from a government agency
  7. Declaration of residency executed by the student's parent/guardian
  8. If the student is an unaccompanied youth as defined in 42 USC 11434a, a declaration of residency executed by the student
  9. If the student is residing in the home of a caregiving adult within district boundaries, an affidavit executed by the caregiving adult in accordance with Family Code 6552 (AR 5111.1)
- The student is placed by court order into a licensed children's institution, foster home, or family home located within the District.

- The student is a homeless youth or foster child and is continuing their education in their school of origin, as required by law.
- The student is a migratory child or the child of a military family and is exercising the right to remain enrolled in their school of origin.
- The student has been approved for enrollment through an interdistrict transfer agreement.
- The student is an emancipated minor who resides within District boundaries.
- The student lives with a caregiving adult within the District, and that adult submits an affidavit affirming caregiving responsibilities.
- The student resides in a state hospital located within the District.
- The student is temporarily confined to a hospital or residential health facility within District boundaries due to a medical condition or temporary disability.
- The student's parent is employed within the District and resides with the student at the place of employment at least three days per school week, even if their permanent residence is outside District boundaries.
- The student's parent was a California resident who was compelled to leave the state against their will due to:
    - a court or government agency order,
    - a transfer by a government agency with custodial authority, or
    - federal immigration enforcement under the Immigration and Nationality Act, and the student resided in California immediately prior to the parent's removal.

In addition, if a student's parent is an active-duty military member who is being transferred or is pending transfer to a California-based military installation, the student is immediately eligible to enroll, even before arriving in the state. In such cases, the school must accept electronic enrollment applications, and proof of residency must be submitted within 10 days of the documented arrival date, as indicated on official military orders.

In the process of verifying a student's residency, the District will not inquire about the citizenship or immigration status of the student or their family members. To learn more about acceptable forms of documentation, please email CWA@desertsands.us**.** If there is reasonable cause to believe that the submitted residency documentation is false or unreliable, the District may take additional steps to confirm that the student meets residency requirements. Should the documentation be deemed insufficient, enrollment may be denied. In that case, the parent/guardian will receive a written explanation outlining the specific reason(s) for the denial and will be informed of their right to appeal the decision. For more information about enrollment and residency, please contact jacqueline.dominguez@desertsands.us. (AR 5111.1)

Transfer Based on Parent Employment (Allen Bill)

Desert Sands Unified School District recognizes that residency for school attendance purposes may be established based on a parent's employment within the District's boundaries. A student shall be considered to have met the District's residency requirements if their parent/guardian is physically employed within the District's attendance area for at least 10 hours during the school week.

Once enrolled under this provision, the student may continue attending District schools through the highest grade level offered, provided that the parent maintains the required employment conditions. Families enrolled through this option are not required to reapply annually, unless there is a change in the parent's employment status that affects eligibility.

The District does not discriminate in the admission of students based on race, ethnicity, gender, family income, academic performance, or any other arbitrary factor. However, the District retains the

right to deny a transfer if the cost of educating the student exceeds the additional state funding generated by the enrollment or if accepting the student would adversely impact a court-ordered or voluntary desegregation plan, as determined by either the District or the student's district of residence.

Students who enroll in the Desert Sands Unified School District using this option are not eligible to participate in any Independent Study Programs (ISP) offered by the District. Families seeking enrollment through this employment-based residency option should contact Jacqueline Dominguez, Child Welfare and Attendance, (760)771-8612 for application procedures and documentation requirements.(AR 5111.1)

Independent Study

The Desert Sands Unified School District acknowledges that a traditional classroom setting may not always meet the unique interests, circumstances, or learning needs of every student. Independent study offers a flexible, individualized educational option for students who seek a more rigorous or accelerated learning experience, face health-related or personal challenges that interfere with their daily attendance, cannot access specific courses due to scheduling conflicts, or need to recover credits or address learning gaps. To meet the needs of our students, DSUSD offers two options:

Short-Term Independent Study (15 School Days or Fewer -cumulative)

- Intended to help students maintain academic progress during brief absences.
- Parents/guardians may request up to 15 school days per year.
- To help streamline the process, it is recommended that the guardian of the student request short-term independent study as soon as the need for an upcoming absence becomes apparent.

Long-Term Independent Study (More Than 15 School Days)

- Available to all students who require or request extended independent study.
- Instruction is substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to that offered in the classroom, enabling students to complete DSUSD's adopted course of study on schedule.
- Participating students have full access to the same services, resources, rights, and privileges afforded to their peers enrolled in traditional programs.

Participation in independent study is voluntary. The school may not require a student to enroll or participate in the program. For students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, placement in independent study for more than 10 cumulative school days per school year is permitted only if the IEP or 504 team determines that it is appropriate and documents this decision in the plan. Parents/guardians and students interested in short-term independent study should contact administration at their child's school. Parents/guardians and students interested in long-term independent study should contact Horizon School at 760-238-9720. (BP 6158)

ATTENDANCE

Absences Due to Confidential Medical Services

California law allows students in grades 7 through 12 to be excused from school without parental consent to obtain confidential medical services. Desert Sands Unified School District staff may contact the medical provider to confirm the appointment time, but they shall not request or record details regarding the services provided. School or DSUSD staff are not permitted to notify a parent/guardian when a student leaves school for this purpose.

EC 46010.1 (BP 5113, AR 5113)

Absences for Religious Exercises

With the written consent of a parent/guardian, a student may be excused from school in order to participate in religious exercises or receive moral or religious instruction conducted at their place of worship or another suitable location designated by a church, religious group, or denomination and such absence shall not be deemed an absence in computing average daily attendance. In accordance with state law, the student must attend school for at least the minimum school day required for their grade level and may not be excused for this purpose on more than four days per school month. Parents/guardians wishing to request such an excused absence must submit a written request in advance to the school principal or designee. (EC 46014)

Excused Absences

Absence may only be marked as "excused" when the reason for the excuse meets the criteria listed under EC 48205 (below) and other applicable laws. Parents/guardians may legally excuse their student for reasons of physical illness and/or mental/behavioral health needs up to 10 absences per school year. Absences for these reasons in excess of 10 shall require verification. See DSUSD AR 5113 for more information.

EC 48205. (a) Notwithstanding Section 48200, a pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is:

(1) Due to the pupil's illness, including an absence for the benefit of the pupil's mental or behavioral health.
(2) Due to quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
(3) For purposes of having medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic services rendered.
(4) For purposes of attending the funeral services or grieving the death of either a member of the pupil's immediate family, or of a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than five days per incident.
(5) For purposes of jury duty in the manner provided for by law.
(6) Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child, for which the school shall not require a note from a doctor.
(7) For justifiable personal reasons, including, but not limited to, an attendance or appearance in court, attendance at a funeral service, observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion, attendance at a religious retreat, attendance at an employment conference, or attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization, when the pupil's absence is requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board of the school district.
(8) For purposes of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Section 12302 of the Elections Code.
(9) For purposes of spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment. Absences granted

pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the superintendent of the school district.

(10) For purposes of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.

(11) For purposes of participating in a cultural ceremony or event.

(12) (A) For purposes of a middle school or high school pupil engaging in a civic or political event, as provided in subparagraph (B), provided that the pupil notifies the school ahead of the absence.

(B) (i) A middle school or high school pupil who is absent pursuant to subparagraph (A) is required to be excused for only one schoolday-long absence per school year.

(ii) A middle school or high school pupil who is absent pursuant to subparagraph (A) may be permitted additional excused absences in the discretion of a school administrator, as described in subdivision (c) of Section 48260.

(13) (A) For any of the purposes described in clauses (i) to (iii), inclusive, if an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, has died, so long as the absence is not more than three days per incident.

(i) To access services from a victim services organization or agency.

(ii) To access grief support services.

(iii) To participate in safety planning or to take other actions to increase the safety of the pupil or an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, including, but not limited to, temporary or permanent relocation.

(B) Any absences beyond three days for the reasons described in subparagraph (A) shall be subject to the discretion of the school administrator, or their designee, pursuant to Section 48260.

(14) Due to the pupil's participation in military entrance processing.

(15) Authorized at the discretion of a school administrator, as described in subdivision (c) of Section 48260.

(b) A pupil absent from school pursuant to this section shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit for those assignments and tests. The teacher of the class from which a pupil is absent shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence.

(c) For purposes of this section, attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed one school day per semester.

(d) Absences pursuant to this section are deemed to be absences in computing average daily attendance and shall not generate state apportionment payments.

(e) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) A "civic or political event" includes, but is not limited to, voting, poll working, strikes, public commenting, candidate speeches, political or civic forums, and town halls.

(2) "Cultural" means relating to the practices, habits, beliefs, and traditions of a certain group of people.

(3) "Immediate family" means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.

(4) "Victim services organization or agency" has the same meaning as defined in subdivision (j) of Section 12945.8 of the Government Code.

Student absence to care for a child for whom the student is the custodial parent shall not require a physician's note. (EC 48205)

For other absences, the student shall, upon returning to school following the absence, present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. Absences shall be verified by the student's parent/guardian, other person having charge or control of the student, or the student if age 18 or older. (EC 46012; 5 CCR 306)

When an absence is planned, the principal or designee shall be notified prior to the date of the absence when possible.

The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Written note, fax, email, or voice mail from parent/guardian or parent representative.

2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The employee shall subsequently record the following:

a. Name of student

b. Name of parent/guardian or parent representative

c. Name of verifying employee

d. Date(s) of absence

e. Reason for absence

3. Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. The employee shall document the verification and include the information specified in item #2 above.

4. Physician's verification.

a. When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, district staff shall 28 not ask the purpose of such appointments but may request a note from the medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.

b. When a student has had 10 absences in the school year due to physical illness and/or mental/behavioral health needs for illness verified by methods listed in #1-3 above, any further absences for illness shall be verified by a physician or school staff.

Loss of Academic Credit/Grades

No student shall have their grade reduced or academic credit withheld due to an excused absence, as defined under the notification, “Excused Absences,” provided the missed assignments or tests that can reasonably be provided are satisfactorily completed within a reasonable timeframe. (AR 5113)

Notice of Minimum Days and Pupil-Free Staff Development Days

The district and school calendars are intended to inform parents and guardians of the minimum days and student-free staff development days scheduled for the school year. Any additional minimum or student-free days that are scheduled after the initial distribution of the school calendar, parents and guardians of affected students will be notified as early as possible, but no later than one month before the scheduled date. To access the district calendar, please go to www.dsusd.us. To access your child's school calendar, please see the website for your child's school of attendance.

Students With Temporary Disabilities

When a temporary disability (a physical, mental or emotional condition) makes on-campus school attendance impossible or inadvisable, the parent/guardian must promptly notify school administration and request individualized instruction, known as "Home and Hospital Instruction."

Within five (5) working days of receiving proper notice, the school will decide whether the student is eligible for Home/Hospital Instruction. If the school determines that Home/Hospital Instruction is appropriate, services will begin within five (5) working days.

Home/Hospital Instruction is provided in the student's home or in a qualifying residential health facility (excluding state hospitals) located within the District. A student with a temporary disability who is in a hospital or other residential health facility, excluding a state hospital, located outside of the school district in which the student's parent or guardian resides, shall be deemed to have complied with the residency requirements for school attendance in the school district in which the hospital is located. It is the primary responsibility of the parent or guardian of a student with a temporary disability to notify the school district in which the student is deemed to reside of the student's presence in a qualifying hospital.

The school will make every reasonable effort to maintain the student's coursework and academic standing while receiving Home/Hospital Instruction. However, certain specialized classes (*e.g.,* Advanced Placement, laboratory sciences, world languages, higher-level mathematics, physical education, and electives) may not be replicable in the home and hospital setting. In such cases, course completion may be postponed to summer school or another venue, and high school graduation could be delayed.

To facilitate reentry, Desert Sands Unified School District may, based on eligibility and upon approval, continue to enroll a student receiving instruction in a qualifying hospital or provide a combination of on-campus and home instruction once hospital confinement ends. Combined services shall not exceed five instructional days per week, and attendance will not be duplicated. The supervisor of attendance will ensure absences are excused until the student can return to regular classes. For questions or to request Home/Hospital Instruction, please get in touch with site administration at your child's school of attendance as soon as the need is identified.

ACADEMICS

Advanced Placement Exam Fees

Advanced Placement (AP) Exams are administered by the College Board. Passing an AP Exam can earn college credit, giving students a cost-effective head start on post-secondary coursework. To ensure every eligible student can benefit from these opportunities, state funds are available to offset AP examination fees for economically disadvantaged students. Any student enrolled in an AP course who meets the income-eligibility criteria may apply for fee assistance by contacting your student's

counselor no later than September 15**.** Coverage is available for all AP exams per qualifying student each year, subject to the availability of state funding.

Apprenticeship and Preapprenticeship Programs

Please Note: This notification is required for districts serving students in grades 11-12. It is recommended for Charter Schools and Schools operated by COEs. The information must include:

- The database of registered program sponsors provided on the internet website of the Department of Industrial Relations' Division of Apprenticeship Standards.
- A school district may use contact information contained in the Division of Apprenticeship Standard's database to obtain information or materials, including, but not limited to, pamphlets or brochures.
- If a school district maintains an internet website, the school district shall make the Division of Apprenticeship Standards' database accessible through a direct link on its internet website.

Apprenticeships will provide students with a pathway to stable, well-paying careers in various growing industries. An apprenticeship combines classroom instruction with paid, on-the-job training, enabling participants to master a skilled trade or profession while earning a wage. Registered pre-apprenticeship is a structured training program that provides hands-on experience and classroom training designed to provide students with the requisite knowledge to transition into an apprenticeship program.

Students may explore apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities by visiting the California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) database, Division of Apprenticeship Standards. The database allows users to search by county, occupation, and program requirements, including minimum age, educational prerequisites, physical qualifications, testing, and English-language proficiency.

Availability of the Course Prospectus

The curriculum, including titles, descriptions, and instructional aims of every course offered by a public school, is compiled at least once annually in a prospectus. Each school site has its prospectus available for review upon request. If a copy of the prospectus is requested, the school may charge an amount not exceeding the cost of duplication. (AR 5020)

California Healthy Youth Act

The California Healthy Youth Act requires that all California school districts provide students in grades 7 through 12 with integrated, comprehensive, medically accurate, age-appropriate, and unbiased instruction in comprehensive sexual health education and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention education at least once in middle school and once in high school. This instruction is designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to protect themselves from the risks presented by HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy; recognize and prevent sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual abuse, and human trafficking; develop healthy, positive, and safe relationships and behaviors; understand sexuality as a regular part of human development; and develop healthy attitudes concerning adolescent growth and development, menstrual health, body image, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, relationships, marriage, and family.

The District is also authorized to administer anonymous, voluntary, and confidential research tools (such as tests, surveys, or questionnaires) to students in grades 7–12 regarding their attitudes and behaviors related to sex and sexual health. Such research tools do not require active consent ("opt in"); however a parent may request to excuse their child in writing. Parents will be provided notice of such research tools and have the opportunity to review the research tool.

Parents/guardians have the right to:

1. Review the educational materials, including the confidential research tools, used in comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education. All written and audiovisual materials used in the instruction are available at the school or district office for parental inspection upon request.
2. Excuse their child from all or part of the instruction, including participation in the confidential and anonymous surveys, by submitting a written request to the District. No student may be subject to disciplinary action, academic penalty, or other sanction for not participating.
3. Request a copy of the California Healthy Youth Act (EC Sections 51930–51939), please contact Desert Sands Unified School District at 760-771-8603 or your student's school site.
4. Be informed whether the comprehensive sexual health or HIV prevention education will be taught by district personnel or outside consultants or guest speakers, and to receive advance notice of when students will be receiving the instruction. When the district chooses to use outside consultants or to hold an assembly with guest speakers, parents will be informed of:
    - The date of instruction
    - The name of the organization or affiliation of each guest speaker
    - The right to receive a copy of EC sections 51933, 51934, and 51938
5. Receive notice by mail or another commonly used method of notification at least 14 days prior to the beginning of the instruction if arrangements for the instruction are made after the start of the school year.

Specific to abuse, including sexual abuse and assault, and human trafficking, Desert Sands Unified School District offers prevention education to help students directly avoid becoming victims of abuse or trafficking. The intent is to educate students on protective behaviors, including online safety, detecting inappropriate student-to-student interactions, establishing healthy relationship boundaries with adults and other students, and understanding how to safely ask for help.

The instruction is age-appropriate and differentiated by grade and instructional setting, and delivered by certificated personnel. Lessons are taught by trained district staff and delivered during grades 7, 8, and 11 in Science class.

Parents/guardians have the right to request in writing that their child not receive all or part of abuse and human trafficking prevention education, and assessments related to that education. When a parent does not permit their child to receive such education, the child may not be subject to disciplinary action, academic penalty, or other sanction. Written requests should be provided to the administration of the school in which their child attends.

California Proficiency Exam

The California Proficiency Program (CPP), which replaced the California High School Proficiency Exam, utilizes the State Board of Education–approved HiSET® subtests in language arts and mathematics to measure student proficiency. Eligible students may take the CPP using paper–pencil or computer-based testing at an approved testing center, or may test at home online with live

proctoring. (*Note:* paper-pencil tests are only available at testing centers). Tests are offered in English and Spanish.

The HiSET–Proficiency is the first assessment within the CPP. Students may prepare for the exam by accessing study materials provided on the HiSET Test Prep Resource webpage. Vendor webpages also include test specifications, testing locations, and a list of available accommodations for testing.

After passing both required subtests, students earn a Certificate of Proficiency, issued by the California State Board of Education. This certificate holds the same legal status as a high school diploma issued by the State of California; however, it does not certify completion of all coursework required for regular high school graduation. A student who obtains a Certificate of Proficiency may choose to remain enrolled in high school or, with verified parent/guardian permission, may exit high school to pursue higher education or employment opportunities.

Students who exit high school after earning the Certificate of Proficiency also have the option of completing the remaining HiSET–Equivalency subtests in science and social studies to earn the California High School Equivalency Certificate, which may expand postsecondary and career options beyond those afforded by the Certificate of Proficiency alone. Students intending to pursue college or university enrollment should confirm admission requirements directly with the institution, as policies vary.

Upon successfully completing all the subtests of the HiSET-Proficiency, students can access their eTranscripts within 48 hours through their myHiSET account. However, it may take up to 14 weeks for students to receive their California Certificate of Proficiency and Official Transcript and Score Report by mail.

Examination fees cannot be charged to students experiencing homelessness or placed in foster care who are under 25 years of age. For testing dates, registration deadlines, preparation resources, accommodations, and additional information, please visit the California Department of Education website at https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/cp.asp.

To be eligible to take the CPP, students must meet both of the following criteria:

1. The student must meet one of the following age/grade requirements:
    - Be 16 years of age or older; or
    - Have been enrolled in grade 10 for one full school year or longer; or
    - Will complete one full school year of grade 10 enrollment by the end of the semester in which the next regular exam is administered.
2. The student must be subject to California's compulsory education laws, demonstrated by one of the following:
    - Current enrollment in a California public high school; or
    - Current enrollment in a private school registered with the California Department of Education, including students who are homeschooled under a private school affidavit; or
    - A current work permit issued by the Department of Industrial Relations to a student working in California, provided the student is enrolled in an independent study program or receiving tutoring that aligns with their work schedule.(AR 6146.2)

College Admissions Requirements

Students in Riverside County and across California have access to a broad range of postsecondary education pathways designed to support academic success and career readiness. Students and families are encouraged to explore the following trusted resources to support postsecondary planning:

- CaliforniaColleges.edu: California's official college and career planning platform and a key component of the Cradle-to-Career (C2C) Data System. This site allows students to track A-G progress, explore careers, apply to colleges, and more.
- hs-articulation.ucop.edu: Search A-G certified high school courses that meet UC/CSU entrance requirements.
- cccCO.edu: Access information and links to all California Community Colleges.
- assist.org: Find approved transfer courses for students moving from a California Community College to a UC or CSU.
- calstate.edu: Learn more about the CSU system, campus locations, and online applications.
- universityofcalifornia.edu: Explore UC admissions, applications, and campus information.
- www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct: Learn about Career Technical Education (CTE) programs and pathways.

Students will have the opportunity to meet with their assigned school counselor to select courses aligned with college admissions requirements, enroll in Career Technical Education (CTE) courses, and explore postsecondary options that best match their goals. CTE programs of study offer a multi-year sequence of courses that blend academic instruction with technical and occupational skills, preparing students for both college and direct entry into high-demand careers. For more information or to schedule a meeting with a counselor, students and parents should contact their school counselor or visit www.dsusd.us.

Whether students plan to pursue a two-year degree, transfer to a four-year university, or enter the workforce with technical training, California offers a variety of public higher education systems and resources to help them succeed.

California Community Colleges

California's community college system provides an affordable and accessible option for all students. Community colleges offer associate degrees, certificates, transfer pathways to four-year universities, and workforce training programs. These colleges are open to any California resident or nonresident who:

- Possesses a high school diploma or its equivalent; or
- Is at least 18 years old and capable of benefiting from the instruction provided, even without a diploma.

California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) Systems

To qualify for freshman admission to a CSU or UC campus, students must complete at least 15 A-G college preparatory courses with a minimum grade of "C" or better. These courses may also be satisfied by:

- Equivalent college coursework; or
- Qualifying scores on standardized exams (*e.g.,* AP, IB, SAT Subject Tests).

Applicants must also graduate from high school and meet any additional admission criteria, such as minimum GPAs or other program-specific requirements. Students may also begin at a community college and transfer to a CSU or UC using established pathways.

Qualifying high school seniors in Riverside County who are on track to meet A-G requirements are being offered immediate, conditional admission to 10 CSU campuses as part of a Direct Admissions Program. Eligible students will receive a brochure mailed to their home address, explaining their conditional admission and outlining next steps. Students must use the CaliforniaColleges.edu platform to select their preferred CSU campuses. Official acceptance letters will be issued directly by the participating universities which include Channel Islands, Chico, East Bay, Humboldt, Maritime Academy, Monterey Bay, San Bernardino, San Marcos, Sonoma, and Stanislaus. Students may still apply to any CSU campus, including those not in the direct admission program. Please note that impacted campuses or programs may have additional admissions criteria.

(BP 6143, AR 6143)

Course Selection and Career Counseling

The parent/guardian of a student in grades 7-12 may participate in their student's career counseling and course selection decisions. In such counseling sessions, the school counselor, teacher, instructor, administrator, or aide will not, on the basis of the student's sex, offer vocational or school program guidance to a student of one sex that is different from that offered to a student of the opposite sex or differentiate career, vocational, or higher education opportunities on the basis of the sex of the student counseled. Any school personnel acting in a career counseling or course selection capacity to a student must affirmatively explore with the student the possibility of careers, or courses leading to careers, that are nontraditional for that student's sex.

(BP6164.2, AR 6164.2)(EC 221.5(d))

Dual Enrollment or International Baccalaureate Courses

Students admitted to or advancing to grades 9th to 12th are advised of the District's dual enrollment at Amistad High School, Indio High School, La Quinta High School, Palm Desert High School, Shadow Hills High School, and Summit High School and the International Baccalaureate program offered at La Quinta High School (EC 48980.6). Families interested in either dual enrollment or IB courses should contact the school site or the district office.

Exemption Based on Religious Beliefs

In certain courses, where appropriate, teachers may objectively discuss the role of various religions in history, world cultures, literature, and the arts, without promoting, denigrating, or showing preference for any particular religion, sect, or religious viewpoint. The Desert Sands Unified School District will ensure that instruction and instructional materials will not interfere with the religious development of any student in whatever beliefs, customs, and/or practices the student embraces, and will treat all religious and religious convictions, including nonbelief, with fairness and respect. In accordance with law, parents have the right to review curriculum materials for the courses in which their student is enrolled. (EC 51101) Parents/guardians have the right to request in writing that their child not participate in instruction on the basis of their religious beliefs, customs, or practices. The written request must include the following information:

1. The specific instructional material (e.g., book or individual lesson) that is subject to the opt-out
2. The specific religious belief(s), custom(s), and/or practice(s) with which the specific instructional material substantially interferes

3. How the specific instructional material substantially interferes with the specific religious belief(s), custom(s), and/or practice(s), including any individual student characteristic relevant to the opt-out request

The Desert Sands Unified School District will evaluate each opt-out request and determine whether the request will be granted. When such a request is granted, the student will not be subject to disciplinary action, academic penalty, or other sanctions. The student will be provided with an alternative lesson/instructional material.
(BP 6141.2, AR 6141.2)

Exemption from Harmful or Destructive Use of Animals

Once a teacher informs students that they will be utilizing live or dead animals or animal parts in the course, a student who has a moral objection to dissection or otherwise harming or destroying animals or animal parts must notify their teacher of the objection. The student's objection must be substantiated by a note from the student's parent/guardian, and the student will not be discriminated against based upon the student's decision to exercise this right.

If the student chooses to refrain from participation in an education project involving the harmful or destructive use of animals, and if the teacher believes that an adequate alternative education project is possible, the teacher may work with the student to develop and agree upon an alternate education project for the purpose of providing the student an alternate avenue for obtaining the knowledge, information, or experience required by the course of study in question. The alternative education project will require a comparable time and effort investment by the student. It will not, as a means of penalizing the student, be more arduous than the original education project.

Students choosing an alternative educational project must pass all examinations of the respective course in order to receive credit. However, if tests require the harmful or destructive use of animals, a student may, similarly, seek alternative tests, as described above. (AR 5145.8)

Exemption from Health Instruction

The Desert Sands Unified School District is required to provide instruction on certain health-related topics. If any portion of this instruction conflicts with the religious training and beliefs, including personal or moral convictions, of a student's parent/guardian, the parent/guardian may submit a written request to the principal or designee to have the student excused from that part of the instruction. (EC 51240(a))

Federal Student Aid for College

Filing a financial aid application is an important first step toward college and career success. Completing either the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) helps determine eligibility for federal, state, institutional, and private financial aid. Because many programs award aid on a first-come, first-served basis, submitting your application in a timely manner is essential.

To support an early awareness of the requirements and facilitate successful completion of the process in 12th grade, Desert Sands Unified School District will advise each 11th-grade student to complete the grade 11 financial aid lessons on the CaliforniaColleges.edu platform. These lessons will include, but are not limited to, documentation and personal information required, definitions used

in the application, student financial aid eligibility requirements, application timelines and submission deadlines, and the importance of submitting applications early.

Desert Sands Unified School District will ensure that each 12th-grade student completes and submits either a FAFSA or a CADAA to the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC). Students should complete only one application, based on their citizenship and residency status. Any information shared by parents, guardians, and students will be handled according to applicable state and privacy laws and regulations. Desert Sands Unified School District may match student lists with FAFSA/CADAA submission data for the sole purpose of verifying completion or confirming an opt-out status.

A parent/guardian or a student who is 18 years of age or older may opt out of completing the FAFSA or CADAA by submitting a Desert Sands Unified School District opt-out form. Desert Sands Unified School District will exempt a student and submit an opt-out form on their behalf if Desert Sands Unified School District determines that the student is unable to comply with the requirement. Parents/guardians will be notified if an exemption is granted. A student who does not complete an application and does not submit an opt-out form will not be penalized or prevented from graduating. (EC 51225.7, EC 51225.8)

High School Graduation Requirements

Desert Sands Unified School District is committed to preparing all students for college, career, and lifelong success. To earn a high school diploma, students must complete the course of study required by Desert Sands Unified School District at their school of enrollment.

Desert Sands Unified School District offers Career Technical Education (CTE) courses aligned to state standards that may serve as an alternative way to meet certain graduation requirements. All CTE programs are offered without discrimination, and a lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to participation.

For more information about high school graduation requirements, including the list of CTE courses offered by Desert Sands Unified School District, including their alignment for subject matter requirements and admission into the California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC), visit: www.dsusd.us. You may also consult the UC Doorways website. (BP 6146.1)

Homework Policy

Students are encouraged to review the District's homework policy located in (BP 6154) (EC 52000e).

Notice of Alternative Programs/Schools

California state law authorizes every school district to establish and operate alternative schools that offer students a different approach to learning. These schools are designed to foster flexible and innovative educational environments that support a wide range of student needs, interests, and learning styles.

EC 58500, defines an alternative school as a school or class group operated in a way that:

- Maximizes students' opportunities to develop positive values such as self-reliance, initiative, kindness, spontaneity, resourcefulness, courage, creativity, responsibility, and joy;
- Recognizes that meaningful learning occurs when students are internally motivated and driven by a genuine desire to learn;

- Promotes self-directed learning, allowing students to pursue their personal interests at their own pace, whether these interests are independently chosen or inspired by teacher-guided options;
- Encourages active collaboration among students, parents, and teachers in developing the educational process and curriculum, with an emphasis on making this collaboration a continuous and lasting practice;
- Supports adaptability and responsiveness to the evolving world around students—including changes in the local community—through ongoing input from students, families, and educators.

Alternative schools are designed to be inclusive, student-centered, and responsive to individual learning needs. They provide options for families seeking a nontraditional learning environment that may better support their child's educational success. If any parent, student, or teacher would like more information about alternative schools, they are encouraged to contact the office of Child Welfare and Attendance, the principal, or the counselor at their school site. (EC 58501)

Participation in Statewide Assessments

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) system includes statewide assessments administered each spring to students in designated grade levels. These assessments measure progress in English language arts, mathematics, and science, and are designed to evaluate key skills, including the ability to write clearly, think critically, and solve problems. Because CAASPP assessments are given statewide, they provide a consistent measure of student performance against California's academic standards.

The CAASPP system is comprised of three assessments including the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments in English language arts and mathematics (grades 3–8 and 11), the California Science Test (CAST) (grade 5, grade 8, and 11), and the California Alternate Assessments (CAA) in English language arts, mathematics, and science for students with significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the general statewide assessments.

Parents/guardians may submit a written request each year to excuse their child from any or all CAASPP assessments. The Superintendent or designee shall approve all such requests. If an exemption is submitted after testing has begun, any assessments completed before the request was received will still be scored, reported to the parent, and included in the student's educational record.(AR 6162.51) (EC 60615) (5 CCR 852)

Screening for Reading Difficulties

In alignment with the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools Literacy by Fifth Grade Initiative, and to support California's goal that all students read proficiently by third grade, DSUSD will administer early literacy screenings to all students in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. These screenings help identify students who may be at risk for reading difficulties and are used as part of a comprehensive instructional approach to guide teaching, monitor progress, and inform conversations between parents and school staff.

Screening results serve only as an early indicator of potential reading challenges and are not a diagnosis. Results are considered alongside additional information to determine appropriate supports, interventions, and, if needed, further evaluation. If a student is identified as being at risk for reading difficulties, DSUSD will provide support aligned with the student's needs. These may include

evidence-based literacy instruction, targeted small-group or one-on-one intervention, progress monitoring, and additional diagnostic assessment when appropriate.

For the 2026-27 school year, students in kindergarten through grade 2 will be screened in September. Students who enroll after the screening, they will be screened within 45 calendar days of enrollment. Parents/guardians who wish to opt their child out of the screening must submit written notice to your child's teacher no later than September 1.

A student may be exempted from the screening for risk of reading difficulties if the parent provides prior written consent and the student meets any of the following criteria:

1. Has a current identification or diagnosis of a reading difficulty, reading disorder, or other disability.
2. Is eligible for an IEP or Section 504 Plan.
3. Is in the process of being assessed for eligibility for special education and related services pursuant to IDEA or a Section 504 Plan, and the student is being evaluated with diagnostic assessments that make screening for risk of reading difficulties redundant.

(BP 6142.91, AR 6142.91) (EC 53008)

State Graduation Requirements – Eligible Students

For purposes of this section, "eligible student" means a student in foster care, a student experiencing homelessness, a current or former juvenile court student, a child of a military family, a migratory student, or a newcomer student. To graduate, students must complete the statewide course requirements outlined in EC 51225.3, along with any Board-approved coursework required by the Desert Sands Unified School District. An eligible student who transfers into DSUSD or moves between DSUSD schools after completing the second year of high school, or a newcomer student in the third or fourth year of high school, shall be exempted from any Board-adopted coursework beyond the statewide requirements, unless it is determined the student can reasonably complete those additional requirements by the end of their fourth year of high school. Students who are not exempted must be reevaluated the following academic year.

Eligible students will be notified of the exemption's availability and whether they qualify. If a student was not properly notified, previously declined the exemption, or was not exempted earlier, the student or education rights holder may request the exemption at any time, and the district must grant it, even if the student is no longer otherwise eligible. Eligible students also have the right to remain in high school for a fifth year to complete statewide or district graduation requirements.

For a student with a disability, eligibility for exemption from Board-adopted coursework also requires that the student's IEP specifies that the IEP team has determined the student is eligible to take the state alternate assessment as allowed by law and that the student is required to complete state standards-aligned coursework to meet the statewide course requirements under EC 51225.3.

Any complaint alleging noncompliance by the District with these requirements may be filed through the Desert Sands Unified School District Uniform Complaint Procedures pursuant to EC 51225.1 and 51225.2.

Transfer of Coursework and Credits

For purposes of this section, "eligible student" means a student in foster care, a student experiencing homelessness, a current or former juvenile court student, a child of a military family, a migratory student, or a newcomer student. When an eligible student transfers out of a school, the school will

provide an official transcript that includes full and partial credits and grades earned. The transcript will reflect:

1. Days of enrollment and/or seat time, if applicable, used to determine full and partial credit based on any satisfactorily completed coursework.
2. Credits and grades listed separately by school, clearly identifying where they were earned.
3. A full record of seat time, including period attendance and days of enrollment.

If the new school has reason to believe the transcript is missing credits or grades, it must contact the prior school within two business days. The prior school must then issue all appropriate full or partial credits and provide all academic and related records within two business days of the request. Schools must accept and issue full credit for any coursework satisfactorily completed by an eligible student at another public school, juvenile court school, charter school, school outside the United States, or nonpublic nonsectarian school. Schools may not require an eligible student to retake a course or repeat a completed portion of a course, unless, after consultation with the education rights holder, it is determined that retaking the course is reasonably necessary for the student to graduate on time. When partial credit is awarded, the student must be enrolled in the same or an equivalent course, as applicable, so that they may complete the full course.

An eligible student may not be prevented from retaking a course or taking a needed course to meet the admission requirements for the California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) systems.(BP 6173, AR 6173, BP 6173.1, AR 6173.1, BP 6175, AR 6175) (EC 48645.5, 48645.7, 49069.5, 51225.1, 51225.2, 51225.31**)**

ENGLISH LEARNERS

Advisory Committee

Each school with more than 20 English learners must have an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC). Parents of English learners, elected by other parents of English learners, serve on this committee. The ELAC helps develop the school's needs assessment, promotes regular attendance, and advises the principal on programs and services for English learners. The ELAC may also elect a representative to the Desert Sands Unified School District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC).

When the Desert Sands Unified School District has more than 50 English learners, a DELAC is established. A majority of its members must be parents of English learners who are not district employees. The DELAC advises the district on programs, services, goals, and compliance related to English learners, and provides input on district plans such as the LCAP.

Both ELAC and DELAC members receive training and materials to support their advisory roles.

(BP 6174, AR 6174)

Identification and Assessment

Upon initial enrollment, Desert Sands Unified School District determines each student's primary language using a Home Language Survey. Any student whose primary language is not English—and who has no prior English proficiency results—must take the Initial English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). Parents/guardians will be notified in writing prior to the administration of the Initial ELPAC.

The Initial and Summative ELPAC must be administered in accordance with state regulations. Students with disabilities will participate using the accommodations, supports, or alternate assessments specified in their IEP or Section 504 Plan. Each identified English learner must take the Summative ELPAC annually until they are reclassified as proficient.

State law also requires Desert Sands Unified School District to notify parents/guardians each year if their child is identified as a Long-Term English Learner (LTEL) or is at risk of becoming an LTEL. DSUSD's English Language Development Coordinator will send these notices at the start of each school year or semester.

You will be notified when your child is assessed for English language proficiency within 30 days after the start of the school year. The notice will include:

1. Whether the child is a long-term English learner or English learner at risk of becoming a long-term English learner, as those terms are defined in Section 313.1.

2. The manner in which the program for English language development instruction will meet the educational strengths and needs of long-term English learners or English learners at risk of becoming long-term English learners.

3. The manner in which the program for English language development instruction will help long-term English learners or English learners at risk of becoming long term English learners develop English proficiency and meet age-appropriate academic standards.(BP 6174, AR 6174) (5 CCR 11307, 5 CCR 11518.5, EC 313, EC 52164.1)

Language Acquisition Programs and Language Programs

Language Acquisition Program

Language acquisition programs are educational programs designed to ensure English acquisition as rapidly and as effectively as possible. As required by Section 11309 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, language acquisition programs for English learners must:

1. Be designed using evidence-based research and include both Designated and Integrated English Language Development;
2. Be allocated sufficient resources to be effectively implemented, including but not limited to, certificated teachers with the appropriate authorizations, necessary instructional materials, pertinent professional development for the proposed program, and opportunities for parent and community engagement to support the proposed program goals; and
3. Lead to grade level proficiency and achievement of the state-adopted academic content standards in English within a reasonable period of time. (Note: When the program model includes instruction in another language, it must lead to proficiency and achievement of the state-adopted academic content standards in that other language within a reasonable period of time.)

Parents may choose a language acquisition program that best suits their child. Desert Sands Unified School DIstrict offers the following language acquisition programs:

Language Program

Language programs offer students the opportunity to be instructed in languages other than English, which may lead to proficiency in such languages. All students, regardless of their primary language,

may enroll in language programs for which they are eligible. Desert Sands Unified School District offers the following language programs:

Structured English Immersion (TK-12th grades)

A language acquisition program for EL students in which nearly all classroom instruction is provided in English, but with curriculum and a presentation designed for students who are learning English. At minimum, students are offered designated ELD and provided access to grade level academic subject matter content with integrated ELD.

Dual Language Immersion Programs

A language acquisition program also referred to as Two-Way Immersion that provides language learning and academic instruction for native speakers of English and native speakers of another language with the goals of high academic achievement, first and second language proficiency, and cross-cultural understanding. This program should be designed using evidence-based research and include both designated and integrated ELD. Currently, this program begins in transitional kindergarten/kindergarten (TK/K) and continues to seventh grade.

Parents may provide input regarding language acquisition programs during the development of the Local Control Accountability Plan (EC 52062). Although schools have an obligation to serve all EL students, parents or guardians of English learners have a right to decline or opt their children out of a school's EL program or out of particular EL services within an EL program. If parents or guardians opt their children out of a school's EL program or specific EL services, the children retain their status as English learners and will be assessed annually with the Summative ELPAC. The school remains obligated to take the affirmative steps required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the appropriate actions required by the Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974 to provide EL students access to its educational programs (20 U.S.C. sections 1703[f], 6312[e][3][A][viii]).

If you have any questions about your child's placement or the type of program options available to you, please contact the Coordinator of Multilingual Learner Programs, Nancy Velador at 760-771-8730.

How to Request the Establishment of a New Program at School

To ensure opportunities for parent and community engagement, parents may provide input regarding the language and language acquisition programs in the Desert Sands Unified School District or to be considered to be offered in the Desert Sands Unified School District during the development of the Local Control and Accountability Plan. Parents who are interested in a different program from those listed above may contact the Coordinator of Multilingual Learner Programs, Nancy Velador at 760-771-8730.

The school will make a written record of each request, including any request submitted verbally, that includes the date of the request, the names of the parent and student making the request, a general description of the request, and the student's grade level on the date of the request. As needed, the school will assist the parent in clarifying the request. All requests are maintained for at least three years from the date of the request.

Timelines and Implementation Process for Language Acquisition Programs

Schools in which parents of 30 students or more per school or the parents of 20 students or more in any grade request a language acquisition program that is designed to provide language instruction will be required to offer such a program to the extent possible. When the number of parents reach the threshold, the Desert Sands Unified School District will:

1. Within 10 days of reaching the threshold, notify the parents of students attending the school, the school's teachers, administrators, and the Desert Sands Unified School District's English learner parent advisory committee and parent advisory committee, in writing, of the requests for a language acquisition program.
2. Identify costs and resources necessary to implement any new language acquisition program, including, but not limited to, certificated teachers with the appropriate authorizations, necessary instructional materials, pertinent professional development for the proposed program, and opportunities for parent and community engagement to support the proposed program goals.
3. Within 60 calendar days of reaching the threshold, and in consideration of Item #2 above, determine whether it is possible to implement the requested language acquisition program and provide written notice of the determination to parents of students attending the school, the school's teachers, and administrators.

If a determination is made to implement the language acquisition program, create and publish a reasonable timeline of actions necessary to implement the program. If a determination is made that it is not possible to implement the program, provide a written explanation of the reason(s) the program cannot be provided. (BP 6142.2, AR 6142.2) (5 CCR 11309, 5 CCR 11310; EC 310)

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Access to Student Mental Health Services

A student's mental health is essential to healthy development, learning, and well-being. Mentally healthy students are better able to build positive relationships, succeed academically, and function effectively at home, in school, and in their communities. When mental health concerns are not identified and addressed early, a student may face increased risks, including behavioral challenges, school disengagement or dropout, substance use, criminal behavior, and other harmful outcomes.

To support student well-being, Desert Sands Unified School District is committed to ensuring that students and parents or guardians receive information at least twice each year on how to initiate access to available school-based and community mental health services. This Annual Notice serves as one of those notifications. A second notification will be provided each school year by the following method: distributed online on the district website, school websites, posters in English and Spanish posted prominently in common student areas (e.g., hallways, bathrooms, cafeterias), during wellness campaigns at school sites, social media, and digital platforms.

Parents, students, staff, and community members can access mental health support through a clearly defined districtwide referral process. Desert Sands Unified School District (DSUSD) utilizes a Request for Assistance (RFA), a standardized referral form used across all schools to address student behavioral health concerns. Referrals are reviewed and processed through each school's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to ensure students are connected with appropriate services and interventions based on their level of need.

To promote accessibility, the RFA is available on the DSUSD website, the Social Emotional Wellness website, and is referenced on district mental health resource posters. Referrals may be submitted by any DSUSD staff member, parent/guardian, community member, or through student self-referral, ensuring multiple pathways for students and families to access mental health support within the school, district, and broader community.

A student 12 years or older may consent to mental health treatment or counseling if the student, in the opinion of the attending mental health professional, is mature enough to participate intelligently in the services. Additionally, the student's parent/guardian shall consent to the student's treatment, unless the mental health professional determines, after consulting with the student, that the involvement of the parent/guardian would be inappropriate. (Family Code 6924).

Administration of Prescribed Medication

Students who are required to take prescribed medication during the regular school day may be assisted by the school nurse or other designated school personnel only when Desert Sands Unified School District receives written requests from both the parent/guardian and the physician/surgeon. The physician's written statement must include the name of the medication, the method of administration, the dosage, and the time(s) the medication is to be taken.

The parent/guardian must also provide a written request indicating that they desire Desert Sands Unified School District to assist the student in accordance with the physician's instructions.

A student may carry and self-administer prescription epinephrine delivery system or inhaled asthma medication at school when Desert Sands Unified School District receives:

1. A written statement from the licensed health care provider that includes the medication name, method, amount, and time schedule, and confirms that the student is able to self-administer the medication; and
2. A written statement from the parent/guardian consenting to self-administration, authorizing the school nurse or designated personnel to consult with the student's health care provider, and releasing Desert Sands Unified School District and its personnel from civil liability if the student experiences an adverse reaction related to self-administration.

For inhaled asthma medication, Desert Sands Unified School District will also accept a written statement from a physician/surgeon contracted with a prepaid health plan lawfully operating in Mexico and licensed as a health care service plan in California, provided the statement is written in English and Spanish and includes the physician's contact information.

A student may be subject to disciplinary action for misuse of an epinephrine delivery system or inhaled asthma medication.

All written requests and physician instructions for medication administration, whether the medication is administered by school personnel or self-administered, must be renewed annually or whenever the medication, dosage, frequency, or purpose of administration changes.

(EC 48980, 49423, 49423.1)

Concussions and Head Injury in Athletics

A concussion is a kind of brain injury. It can be caused by a bump or hit to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force that shakes the head. Concussions can appear in any sport and can look differently in each person. Most concussions get better with rest and over 90% of

athletes fully recover. However, all concussions should be considered serious. If not recognized and managed the right way, they may result in problems including brain damage and even death.

Most concussions occur without being knocked out. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours to appear. Even though a traditional brain scan (e.g., MRI or CT) may be “normal”, the brain has still been injured. If an athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one, this can lead to prolonged recovery (weeks to months), or even to severe brain swelling (Second Impact Syndrome) with devastating consequences. There is an increasing concern that head impact exposure and recurrent concussions may contribute to long-term neurological problems. One goal of concussion education is to prevent a too early return to play so that serious brain damage can be prevented.

An athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in an athletic activity shall be immediately removed from the athletic activity for the remainder of the day, and shall not be permitted to return to the athletic activity until the athlete is evaluated by and receives written clearance to return to the athletic activity from a licensed health care provider. If the licensed health care provider determines that the athlete sustained a concussion or a head injury, the athlete shall also complete a graduated return-to-play protocol of no less than seven days in duration under the supervision of a licensed health care provider.

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:

- Looks dizzy
- Looks spaced out
- Confused about plays
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily or awkwardly
- Answers questions slowly
- Slurred speech
- Shows a change in personality or way of acting
- Can’t recall events before or after the injury
- Seizures or “has a fit”
- Any change in typical behavior or personality
- Passes out

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Headaches
- “Pressure in head”
- Nausea or throws up
- Neck pain
- Has trouble standing or walking
- Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision
- Bothered by light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or slowed down
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Drowsiness
- Change in sleep patterns
- Loss of memory
- “Don’t feel right”
- Tired or low energy
- Sadness
- Nervousness or feeling on edge
- Irritability
- More emotional
- Confused
- Concentration or memory problems
- Repeating the same question/ comment

Student-athletes and parents are required to review and sign a Concussion Information Sheet as part of their annual sports packet. (EC 49475)

Consent to Physical Exams

Periodic health examinations help identify medical conditions that may affect a student's learning and development. These examinations may also assist in determining whether a student may qualify for services or accommodation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504. Parents/guardians may file an annual written statement with the school principal withholding consent for their child to participate in physical examinations. Students exempted from examinations may still be excluded from school when a contagious or infectious disease is reasonably suspected. (EC 49480, 49451, 49452)

HPV Immunization

Desert Sands Unified School District is committed to supporting the health and safety of every student. In accordance with Health and Safety Code 120336, students in California are advised to follow current immunization guidelines recommended by the California Department of Public Health. These guidelines recommend full human papillomavirus (HPV) immunization before admission or advancement to the eighth grade in any public or private school. HPV vaccination can prevent over 90 percent of cancers caused by HPV. HPV vaccines are very safe, and extensive scientific research shows that the benefits of HPV vaccination far outweigh the potential risks. (EC 48980.4)

Immunizations

To protect the health of all students and staff and to limit the spread of infectious diseases, California law requires that students be immunized against certain communicable diseases. Students may not be admitted to any public or private elementary or middle school, preschool, or childcare program, nor advanced into grade 7, unless they meet state immunization requirements. Parents/guardians may review the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guide, Required Immunizations for School Entry, available on the CDPH website.

Students who attend programs without classroom-based instruction, such as a home-based private school or an independent study, are not required to meet immunization requirements. However, parents/guardians must still submit the student's immunization records to the school. Immunization requirements may not be used to deny a student access to special education services required by their IEP.

Exemptions based on personal beliefs are no longer accepted. Medical exemptions must be submitted only through the California Immunization Registry–Medical Exemption (CAIR-ME) system, using the standardized CDPH form. Parents/guardians must first create an account and obtain a medical exemption request number before visiting their child's doctor. Accounts can be created at https://cair.cdph.ca.gov/exemptions/home.

If a currently enrolled student who was believed to be in compliance is later found not to meet the immunization requirements for admission, the parent/guardian will receive written notice requiring proof of immunization or a valid exemption within 10 school days. A student who is not fully immunized may be temporarily excluded from school if they are exposed to a specified communicable disease and do not have verified immunization for that disease.

Desert Sands Unified School District cooperates with state and local public health agencies to implement measures that prevent and control communicable diseases in school-aged children. Desert Sands Unified School District may utilize its personnel, property, or funds to facilitate immunization clinics and may permit licensed physicians or registered nurses to administer vaccines with the written consent of parents/guardians. When feasible, Desert Sands Unified School District may access the California Immunization Registry (CAIR) to track immunization records, identify missed opportunities, and support the completion of immunizations for students of all ages.

Free or low-cost immunizations are available. For information, please contact schoolnurse@desertsands.us. (BP 5141.31, AR 5141.31)(17 CCR 6055; EC 48216, 49403; HSC 120325, 120372)

Medical or Hospital Services

The medical costs of student accidents are normally the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Student accident insurance solves many problems in advance. Every year, the Desert Sands Unified School District provides parents/guardians with applications for school-time accident insurance. The contract is made between the parent/guardian and the insurance company. The Desert Sands Unified School District only supplies the application forms. Click the following link to access the form: https://myers-stevens.com/enrollment/. This low-cost accident insurance helps pay for the medical costs if a child is injured while under the jurisdiction of the school. The principal of your child's school will provide you with further information upon request. The application form is included in this handbook. (EC 49472 & 48206.3)

Oral Health Assessment

Good oral health supports children's overall well-being and readiness to learn. California law requires that all children receive an oral health assessment (dental check-up) during their first year in public school, whether in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, or first grade.

The assessment must be completed by a licensed dentist or other licensed/registered dental health professional. The assessment shall occur no earlier than 12 months before the child's initial school enrollment and be submitted to the school no later than May 31 of the student's first school year.

The dental provider will complete the state-approved Oral Health Assessment Form, which must be returned to the school as proof of completion. A student's health information will be kept confidential, and no identifying information will be included in any reports generated from this requirement.

If a parent/guardian is unable to obtain, or does not consent to, the required assessment, they must submit a Waiver of Oral Health Assessment Requirement form to the school. To find a dentist who accepts Medi-Cal, parents/guardians may contact Medi-Cal Dental Telephone Service Center: 1-800-322-6384 or go to the Medi-Cal Dental Website: https://dental.dhcs.ca.gov/

Student Insurance for Athletic Teams

Under state law, school districts are required to ensure that all members of school athletic teams have accidental injury insurance that covers medical and hospital expenses. This insurance requirement may be met by Desert Sands Unified School District offering insurance or other health benefits that cover medical and hospital expenses. Some students may qualify to enroll in no-cost or

low-cost local, state, or federally sponsored health programs. Information about these programs may be obtained by calling:

- Children's Health Insurance Program at 1-800-541-555 or visiting https://www.usa.gov
- Medi-Cal at 1-800-300-1506 or visiting https://www.coveredca.com/health/medi-cal/children/

Members of school athletic teams include members of any extramural athletic team, school bands, orchestras, cheerleaders and their assistants, pom and dance team, team managers and their assistants, and any student selected by the school or student body organization to directly assist in the conduct of the athletic event.

School Meals – Child Nutrition and Nondiscrimination Policies

Desert Sands Unified School District participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program, which provides free meals to all students—no meal application required. However, to help your student qualify for Summer EBT benefits/SUN Bucks we encourage parents/guardians to complete the Universal Benefit Application online at: www.coolschoolmeals.com; applications will be randomly selected for income verification. For additional information, please contact our office by phone 760-771-8559 or via email: dsusd.nutrition@desertsands.us.

For SUN Bucks information please call (877) 328-9677. The helpline provides automated support 24 hours a day,seven days per week. Live agents are available Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. – 8 p.m. To check your benefit balance and claim status, visit the California EBT cardholder website.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint-filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (*e.g.,* Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Scoliosis Screenings

This program is currently suspended by the California Department of Finance.

Type I Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes in children is an autoimmune disease that can be fatal if untreated, and the guidance provided in this information sheet is intended to raise awareness about this disease.

Type 1 diabetes usually develops in children and young adults but can occur at any age

- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cases of type 1 diabetes in youth increased nationally from 187,000 in 2018 to 244,000 in 2019, representing an increase of 25 per 10,000 youths to 35 per 10,000 youths, respectively.
- The peak age of diagnosis of type 1 diabetes is 13-14 years, but diagnosis can also occur much earlier or later in life.

Type 1 diabetes affects insulin production

- As a normal function, the body turns the carbohydrates in food into glucose (blood sugar), the basic fuel for the body's cells.
- The pancreas makes insulin, a hormone that moves glucose from the blood into the cells.
- In type 1 diabetes, the body's pancreas stops making insulin, and blood glucose levels rise.
- Over time, glucose can reach dangerously high levels in the blood, which is called hyperglycemia.
- Untreated hyperglycemia can result in diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA), which is a life-threatening complication of diabetes.

Risk Factors Associated with Type 1 Diabetes

- It is recommended that students displaying warning signs associated with type 1 diabetes, which are described below, should be screened (tested) for the disease by their health care provider.
- Researchers do not completely understand why some people develop type 1 diabetes, and others do not; however, having a family history of type 1 diabetes can increase the likelihood of developing type 1 diabetes.
- Other factors may play a role in developing type 1 diabetes, including environmental triggers such as viruses. Type 1 diabetes is not caused by diet or lifestyle choices.

Warning Signs and Symptoms Associated with Type 1 Diabetes and Diabetic Ketoacidosis

Warning signs and symptoms of type 1 diabetes in children develop quickly, in a few weeks or months, and can be severe. If your child displays the warning signs below, contact your child's primary health care provider or pediatrician for a consultation to determine if screening your child for type 1 diabetes is appropriate:

- Increased thirst
- Increased urination, including bed-wetting after toilet training
- Increased hunger, even after eating
- Unexplained weight loss
- Feeling very tired
- Blurred vision
- Very dry skin
- Slow healing of sores or cuts
- Moodiness, restlessness, irritability, or behavior changes

DKA is a complication of untreated type 1 diabetes. DKA is a medical emergency. Symptoms include:

- Fruity breath
- Dry/flushed skin
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pains
- Trouble breathing
- Confusion

Types of Diabetes Screening Tests That Are Available

- **Glycated hemoglobin (A1C) test**. A blood test measures the average blood sugar level over two to three months. An A1C level of 6.5 percent or higher on two separate tests indicates diabetes.
- **Random (non-fasting) blood sugar test**. A blood sample is taken any time without fasting. A random blood sugar level of 200 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) or higher suggests diabetes.
- **Fasting blood sugar test**. A blood sample is taken after an overnight fast. A level of 126 mg/dL or higher on two separate tests indicates diabetes.
- **Oral glucose tolerance test**. A test measuring the fasting blood sugar level after an overnight fast with periodic testing for the next several hours after drinking a sugary liquid. A reading of more than 200 mg/dL after two hours indicates diabetes.

Type 1 Diabetes Treatments

There are no known ways to prevent type 1 diabetes. Once type 1 diabetes develops, medication is the only treatment. If your child is diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, their health care provider will be able to help develop a treatment plan. Your child's health care provider may refer your child to an endocrinologist, a doctor specializing in the endocrine system and its disorders, such as diabetes. Contact your student's school nurse, school administrator, or health care provider if you have questions.

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- KidsHealth
- Mayo Clinic
- National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health's MedLine

Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes in adults.

- Until a few years ago, type 2 diabetes was rare in children, but it is becoming more common, especially for overweight teens.
- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in three American children born after 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes in his or her lifetime.

Type 2 diabetes affects the way the body is able to use sugar (glucose) for energy.

- The body turns the carbohydrates in food into glucose, the basic fuel for the body's cells.

- The pancreas makes insulin, a hormone that moves glucose from the blood to the cells.
- In type 2 diabetes, the body's cells resist the effects of insulin, and blood glucose levels rise.
- Over time, glucose reaches dangerously high levels in the blood, which is called hyperglycemia.
- Hyperglycemia can lead to health problems like heart disease, blindness, and kidney failure.

Risk Factors Associated with Type 2 Diabetes

- It is recommended that students displaying or possibly experiencing the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes be screened (tested) for the disease.
- Researchers do not completely understand why some people develop type 2 diabetes and others do not; however, the following risk factors are associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes in children:
  - **Being overweight**. The single greatest risk factor for type 2 diabetes in children is excess weight. In the U.S., almost one out of every five children is overweight. The chances are more than double that an overweight child will develop diabetes.
  - **Family history of diabetes**. Many affected children and youth have at least one parent with diabetes or have a significant family history of the disease.
  - **Inactivity**. Being inactive further reduces the body's ability to respond to insulin.
  - **Specific racial/ethnic groups**. Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, or Asian/Pacific Islanders are more prone than other ethnic groups to develop type 2 diabetes.
  - **Puberty**. Young people in puberty are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than younger children, probably because of normal rises in hormone levels that can cause insulin resistance during this stage of rapid growth and physical development.

Warning Signs and Symptoms Associated with Type 2 Diabetes

Warning signs and symptoms of type 2 diabetes in children develop slowly, and initially there may be no symptoms. However, not everyone with insulin resistance or type 2 diabetes develops these warning signs, and not everyone who has these symptoms necessarily has type 2 diabetes.

- Increased hunger, even after eating
- Unexplained weight loss
- Increased thirst, dry mouth, and frequent urination
- Feeling very tired
- Blurred vision
- Slow healing of sores or cuts
- Dark velvety or ridged patches of skin, especially on the back of the neck or under the arms
- Irregular periods, no periods, and/or excess facial and body hair growth in girls
- High blood pressure or abnormal blood fats levels

Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Methods and Treatments

Healthy lifestyle choices can help prevent and treat type 2 diabetes. Even with a family history of diabetes, eating healthy foods in the correct amounts and exercising regularly can help children achieve or maintain a normal weight and normal blood glucose levels.

- **Eat healthy foods**. Make wise food choices. Eat foods low in fat and calories.
- **Get more physical activity**. Increase physical activity to at least 60 minutes every day.
- **Take medication**. If diet and exercise are not enough to control the disease, it may be necessary to treat type 2 diabetes with medication.

The first step in treating type 2 diabetes is to visit a doctor. A doctor can determine if a child is overweight based on the child's age, weight, and height. A doctor can also request tests of a child's blood glucose to see if the child has diabetes or pre-diabetes (a condition which may lead to type 2 diabetes).

Types of Diabetes Screening Tests That Are Available

- **Glycated hemoglobin (A1C) test**. A blood test measures the average blood sugar level over two to three months. An A1C level of 6.5 percent or higher on two separate tests indicates diabetes.
- **Random (non-fasting) blood sugar test**. A blood sample is taken at a random time. A random blood sugar level of 200 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) or higher suggests diabetes. This test must be confirmed with a fasting blood glucose test.
- **Fasting blood sugar test**. A blood sample is taken after an overnight fast. A fasting blood sugar level less than 100 mg/dL is normal. A level of 100 to 125 mg/dL is considered pre-diabetes. A level of 126 mg/dL or higher on two separate tests indicates diabetes.
- **Oral glucose tolerance test**. A test measuring the fasting blood sugar level after an overnight fast with periodic testing for the next several hours after drinking a sugary liquid. A reading of more than 200 mg/dL after two hours indicates diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes in children is a preventable/treatable disease and the guidance provided in this information sheet is intended to raise awareness about this disease. Contact your student's school nurse, school administrator, or health care provider if you have questions.

References

- American Diabetes Association Clinical Journal
- Helping Children with Diabetes Succeed: A Guide for School Personnel
- KidsHealth
- Mayo Clinic
- National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health's MedLine
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Vision and Hearing Tests

Upon first enrollment in a California school district, the governing board of a school is required to provide for the testing of vision and hearing of each student by duly qualified supervisors of health. State mandate includes hearing and vision screenings annually for the following grades: TK/K, 2nd, 5th, and 8th. The hearing screening is required for 10th grade. Children will be exempt if parent/guardian notifies the school principal in writing that such appraisal is in conflict with their religious beliefs. (EC 49452 and 49455)

STUDENT SAFETY

Asbestos Management Plan

Parents/guardians have the right to inspect a complete and up-to-date copy of the District's Asbestos Management Plan, which outlines the identification and management of asbestos-containing

materials in school buildings. The plan is available for review free of charge at the District office and at school offices during regular business hours. The District may charge a reasonable fee to make copies of the management plan. For additional information, please contact Risk Management at 760-771-8511. (BP 3514, AR 3514)

Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting

The district is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all students. Under California law, all DSUSD employees, including classified staff, certificated staff, athletic coaches, contractors, and volunteers, are mandated reporters. Mandated reporters must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement or child welfare agency whenever they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has been the victim of abuse or neglect. Reasonable suspicion means it is objectively reasonable for a person, based on facts and their training or experience, to suspect abuse or neglect. It does not require certainty or proof. District employees must not conduct their own investigation before making a report. The fact that a child is homeless or an unaccompanied minor is not, by itself, a sufficient basis for making a report.

All mandated reports must be made immediately by telephone, followed by a written report or in person with the appropriate agency. Reports may be filed with the local police or sheriff's department, county probation department, or the Riverside County Department of Public and Social Services (DPSS). Both the reporter's identity and the content of the report are confidential and may be disclosed only to authorized agencies.

Parents/guardians may file a report if they suspect that a school employee or any adult at a school site has abused a child. Reports may be made directly to local law enforcement. Parents/guardians may also notify the district by contacting Dr. Lisa McColl, District Resolution & Compliance Officer.

Child abuse does not include reasonable and necessary force used by school employees or individuals engaged in school activities when used to stop a disturbance that threatens physical injury or property damage, act in self-defense, confiscate weapons or dangerous objects from a student, or maintain order, protect property, safeguard student safety, or uphold conditions conducive to learning. (BP 5141.4, AR 5141.4) (EC 48987)

Dangers of Synthetic Drugs

Synthetic drugs, including fentanyl, pose a serious and growing danger to youth. Fentanyl is a highly potent opioid—up to 50 times stronger than heroin—and even tiny amounts can cause a fatal overdose, especially when used without a prescription or medical supervision. Because illicit synthetic drugs are often produced illegally, users have no way of knowing their strength, purity, or contents.

Fentanyl is increasingly found in counterfeit pills made to look like real medications (such as oxycodone, Xanax, or Adderall). Pills obtained from friends, acquaintances, social media, video game platforms, or online marketplaces may contain lethal amounts of fentanyl, even from a single use. For more information, visit the California Department of Public Health: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/Pages/Fentanyl.aspx

Students will not be prohibited from carrying fentanyl test strips or a federally approved over-the-counter opioid antagonist (such as naloxone/Narcan) while at school or participating in school activities. These items may be used in an emergency when a person is experiencing, or is

believed to be experiencing, an opioid overdose. Students must follow all Desert Sands Unified School District safety rules and state laws regarding appropriate possession and use.

Because of the widespread presence of fentanyl in the illicit drug supply, the safest way to prevent an overdose is to avoid any drug that is not prescribed by a licensed health care professional. (BP 5131.6)

Drowning Prevention

In California and across the United States, drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 4. For children ages 5 to 14, drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury death after motor vehicle crashes. Even when a child survives a non-fatal drowning incident, it can result in severe brain damage or permanent disability. Students, parents, and caregivers are strongly encouraged to review the water safety and drowning prevention materials [Drowning Prevention]

Employee Interactions with Students

Employees, independent contractors, and volunteers of DSUSD are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards, demonstrate professional behavior, comply with all DSUSD policies and regulations, and follow all state and federal laws. All adults working with students must exercise sound judgment and always maintain appropriate professional boundaries, both within and outside the educational setting.

To ensure student safety and maintain a positive school climate, employees must refrain from engaging in unlawful, inappropriate, or boundary-blurring behaviors that compromise the trust inherent in the adult–student relationship. Employees are prohibited from engaging in any conduct that violates law, Board policy, or administrative regulation, including but not limited to:

1. Initiating inappropriate physical contact
2. Being alone with a student outside view of others
3. Visiting a student's home or inviting a student to visit the employees home without parent/guardian consent
4. Maintaining personal contact with a student that has no legitimate educational purpose, by phone, letter, electronic communications or other means, without including the student's parent/guardian or the principal
5. Creating or participating in social networking sites for communication with students, other than those created by the district, without prior written approval of the principal or designee
6. Inviting or accepting requests from student, or former students who are minors, to connect on personal social networking sites (e.g., "friending" or "following: on social media), unless the site is dedicated to school business
7. Singling out a particular student for personal attention and friendship, including giving gifts and/or nicknames to individual students
8. Addressing a student in an overly familiar manner, such as by using a term of endearment
9. Socializing or spending time with students outside of school-sponsored events, except as participants in community activities
10. Sending or accompanying students on personal errands unrelated to any legitimate educational propose
11. Transporting a student in a personal vehicle without prior authorization
12. Encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships

13. Disclosing personal, family, or other private matters to students or sharing personal secrets with students

All reports of employee misconduct will be promptly investigated, and necessary interventions will be taken to protect student safety and ensure the integrity of the investigation. Any employee found to have engaged in inappropriate conduct or violated DSUSD policy, or retaliates against a person who reports the violation or participates in the complaint process, is subject to disciplinary action. Certificated employees may also be reported to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing when required. (BP 4119.24, 4219.24, 4319.24)

Megan's Law/Sex Offenders

The district will follow the direction or advice of local law enforcement regarding the presence of a registered sex offender on campus, as law enforcement is best positioned to assess safety risks and necessary precautions.

Parents/guardians seeking information about registered sex offenders in the community may contact local law enforcement or visit the Megan's Law website maintained by the California Department of Justice at http://meganslaw.ca.gov/. The website includes information on community safety, sex offender facts, frequently asked questions, and registration requirements in California.

Nondiscrimination Programs and Activities

DSUSD is committed to providing equal opportunity for all individuals in its programs and activities, including equal access to the Boys Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. District programs, activities, and practices shall be free from unlawful discrimination, including discrimination based on race, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, ethnic group identification, ethnicity, age, religion, political affiliation, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information; a perception that a person has one or more of these characteristics; association with an individual or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics; or affiliation with the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. Transgender students shall be permitted to participate in gender-segregated school programs and activities (*e.g.,* athletic teams, sports competitions, and field trips) and to use facilities consistent with their gender identity.

All individuals shall be treated equitably when accessing and receiving services from the DSUSD and its schools. Lack of English language skills shall not be a barrier to admission or participation. When 15% or more of a school's students speak the same primary language other than English, all notices, reports, statements, or records sent to parents/guardians will be translated into that language. Parents or guardians may respond in English or in their primary language.

DSUSD programs and activities shall be free of any discriminatory use, selection, or rejection of textbooks, instructional materials, library books, or similar educational resources. District programs and activities shall also be free of any racially derogatory or discriminatory school or athletic team names, mascots, or nicknames.

DSUSD programs and facilities shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related regulations. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the District's web and mobile applications comply with technical standards prescribed by law, and that the District provides

appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure individuals with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from district services, programs, or activities. Examples include qualified interpreters or readers, assistive listening devices, assistive technologies (such as website accessibility features), notetakers, and written materials in accessible formats (*e.g.,* large print, Braille). Individuals requiring accommodation should notify Al Bennett, Director, Child Welfare and Attendance, alpercy.bennettjr@desertsands.us as early as possible, preferably in advance of a school-sponsored function, program, or meeting. The District's Uniform Complaint Procedures will be utilized to investigate and resolve all allegations of unlawful discrimination in district programs and activities.

Pesticide Products

Desert Sands Unified School District uses pesticides that pose the least possible hazard and are applied in a manner designed to minimize risks to people, property, and the environment. Pesticides are used only when necessary, and only after monitoring indicates that treatment is needed based on established guidelines and thresholds.

When pesticides are applied, Desert Sands Unified School District will post a visible warning sign at each treated area of the school site at least 24 hours before the pesticide application, and they will remain posted for 72 hours after the application is completed.

In emergency situations where pesticides must be applied immediately to protect the health and safety of students, staff, or others at the site, advance posting may not be possible. In such cases, warning signs will be posted as soon as the application occurs and will remain posted for 72 hours.

Parents/guardians may register at their child's school to receive advance notification of individual pesticide applications. Registered parents/guardians will be notified by a school site designee at least 72 hours before a pesticide is applied, except in emergencies. Each notification will include the product name, the active ingredient(s), and the intended date of application. Parents seeking additional information about pesticides and strategies for reducing pesticide use, as developed by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, may visit https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/schoolipm/. (AR 3514.2)

A copy of the LEA/District's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan is available for review at:
https://www.dsusd.us/departments/business_services/maintenance_operations/operations_resources

Reporting Threats

State law requires that school employees who interact with students in grades 6-12 take immediate action to report any threat or perceived threat of a homicidal act that they are alerted to or observe to local law enforcement. A threat or perceived threat refers to any action, statement, or writing by a student that creates a reasonable suspicion they are preparing to carry out a homicidal act connected to a school or school-related activity. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Possession or depiction of firearms, ammunition, or weapons;
- Drawings, writings, or social media posts depicting shootings, targets, or acts of violence;
- Any form of expression that suggests intent to inflict physical harm, destruction, or death;
- Verbal or written warnings made by the student or communicated by another student, parent, or individual. (BP 5131.7)

Safe Storage of Firearms

To help prevent accidents and injuries involving children, California has implemented laws that require parents/guardians to safely store firearms so that children do not have access. Many incidents of students bringing firearms to school occur when a child gains access to a firearm at home, situations that are preventable through secure storage practices. Families should review this notice and ensure their practices comply with California law.

With very limited exceptions, California law makes it a crime for any person to store or leave a firearm, loaded or unloaded, on premises under their control when the person knows or reasonably should know a child is likely to gain access to the firearm without parental permission, and the child does gain access, and the child thereby (1) causes the death or injury of the child or another person; (2) carries the firearm to any public place, including any preschool or K–12 school or school-sponsored activity; or (3) unlawfully brandishing the firearm. A parent/guardian may receive additional criminal penalties if someone dies or suffers great bodily injury. The parent/guardian may also be held civilly liable for damages resulting from the child discharging the firearm.

California law also makes it a crime to negligently store or leave a firearm where a child is likely to access it, even if the child never actually gains access, unless reasonable steps have been taken to secure the firearm. A gun owner found criminally liable under these California laws faces a 10-year prohibition on possessing, owning, or purchasing firearms for individuals convicted under these laws.

The safest and most effective way to comply with the law is to store all firearms unloaded, in a locked container or secured with a locking device that renders them inoperable, with ammunition stored separately from the firearm. Secure storage devices, such as gun safes, cable locks, and trigger locks, significantly reduce the risk of unauthorized access. Many local law enforcement agencies provide free or low-cost gun locks. (EC 48986)

School Bus Safety

Bus Conduct

Bus transportation is a privilege and not a right. The district shall provide bus transportation to students who reside beyond reasonable limits from the school of assignment. Students living in the non-transportation radius areas may request access to existing bus routes on a space-available basis as determined by the Director of Transportation. School bus stops will not be positioned within non-transportation radius areas. Please refer to section Board Policy 3541.
Parental consent to transport pupils is necessary in which the parent/guardian shares responsibility with the student for the conduct of said student. Violation of the Rules of Conduct for School Bus Passengers may result in a student losing the right to the privilege of bus transportation. A citation system shall be followed to identify student passengers who violate the Rules of Conduct. Upon receipt of a citation, the principal shall conduct the necessary investigation and take disciplinary action as appropriate which may include suspension of transportation privileges. (BP 5131.1)

All pupils of the Desert Sands Unified School District shall behave in a proper manner while on the bus showing courteous consideration for the rights of other students. All passengers shall obey the following rules:

1. Follow the bus driver’s instructions at all times.
2. Board and leave the bus only at your assigned bus stop.

3. Arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes before, but not more than 10 minutes before, the bus is scheduled to leave. Stand in line and wait for the bus. (The bus will not wait for students at any stop.)

4. Fill seats as directed by the driver and remain in your seat while on the bus. If a bus is equipped with seat belts they must be used.

5. Report to the bus driver, vandalism or damage to the bus.

6. Report lost or found articles to the bus driver.

7. When getting off the bus, cross the street in the crosswalk. Follow the bus driver's instructions. Never cross the street behind the bus.

8. Do not smoke on the bus.

9. Do not use profanity or abusive language.

10. Do not talk to the driver except when necessary.

11. Do not speak loudly while on the bus. Speak quietly or not at all.

12. Do not eat or drink while on the bus. Water is permitted.

13. Do not put your head, arms or any part of your body outside the bus at any time.

14. Do not litter or damage the bus. Parents/Guardians must pay for damage caused by vandalism.

15. Do not throw anything within the bus or out of the bus.

16. Do not open or use the emergency exits except in an emergency, as directed by the bus driver.

17. Respect others' personal space. Keep hands and feet to yourself.

Pupils who violate any of the above rules of conduct will be given a bus citation. Written citations will be given by the bus driver to the Principal. The Principal will notify the parent/guardian and the pupil. Each citation will be investigated to determine facts and a parent/guardian-pupil conference will be held if necessary.

The consequences for receiving a citation are as follows:

1st Offense: Verbal Warning

2nd Offense: Written warning using the Misconduct Citation form; parent communication

3rd Offense: Written citation using the Misconduct Citation form and removal of transportation for one week; SST recommended

4th Offense: Written citation using the Misconduct Citation form and removal of transportation for two weeks; follow-up SST recommended

5th Offense: Written citation using the Misconduct Citation form and removal of transportation for one month; follow-up SST recommended

6th Offense: Written citation using the Misconduct Citation form and removal of transportation for the remainder of the school year; follow-up SST recommended

General Rules of Conduct at School Bus Loading Zones

1. Arrive Early and Wait Safely

- Arrive at the bus stop or loading zone at least 5 minutes before the scheduled bus arrival.
- Wait in a safe, orderly manner — no running, pushing, or roughhousing.

2. Stay Off the Roadway
    - Remain on the sidewalk or designated waiting area.
    - Do not step into the roadway until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver signals you to board.
3. Respect the Danger Zone
    - Stay at least 6 feet (three giant steps) away from the bus until it stops completely.
    - Never walk behind the bus.
    - If you drop something near the bus, tell the driver — do not try to pick it up yourself.
4. Follow the Bus Driver's Instructions
    - The bus driver is in charge at all times.
    - Listen carefully and follow directions promptly and respectfully.
5. Line Up Quietly and Politely
    - Form a single-file line.
    - Wait your turn to board; no cutting, shoving, or crowding others.
6. Keep Noise and Behavior Appropriate
    - Speak quietly.
    - No yelling, whistling, or loud noises that could distract the driver or other students.
    - No inappropriate language, gestures, or actions.
7. No Phones or Devices in Loading Zones
    - Avoid distractions such as phones, headphones, or gaming devices when approaching or waiting in a loading zone.
8. Be Respectful to Others
    - Treat fellow students, school staff, and the bus driver with courtesy and respect at all times.
    - Follow all school rules while in the loading zone.
9. Crossing the Street
    - Only cross the street in front of the bus after the driver gives a clear signal.
    - Always look left, right, and left again before stepping into the street.
10. Be Prepared
    - Have your backpack and belongings ready to board before the bus arrives.
    - Do not leave personal items in the loading zone.

Instructions for Walking to and from the School Bus Stop

To ensure the safety of all students, the following guidelines must be followed when walking to and from the school bus stop:

General Safety Guidelines

1. Leave on Time
    - Plan to leave home early enough to arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes before the scheduled pickup time.
2. Use Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- Always walk on the sidewalk. If no sidewalk is available, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible.
- Cross streets only at marked crosswalks or intersections. Obey all traffic signals and crossing guards.

3. Avoid Distractions
   - Do not use cell phones, headphones, or other electronic devices while walking. Stay alert to your surroundings.
4. Walk, Don't Run
   - Running near traffic or in parking lots is dangerous. Always walk in a calm, controlled manner.
5. Be Visible
   - Wear bright or reflective clothing in the early morning or late afternoon. Carry a flashlight if it is dark.

Safety
- Walk in Groups when possible. There is safety in numbers, especially for younger students.
- Parents are encouraged to walk with young children to and from the bus stop or organize a walking group.

At the Bus Stop
- Stand Safely Back
- Remain at least 6 feet (three giant steps) away from the edge of the road while waiting for the bus.
- Respect Others
- No pushing, shoving, or horseplay. Behave respectfully and quietly while waiting.
- Wait for the Bus to Stop Completely
- Do not approach the bus until it has fully stopped and the driver signals that it is safe to board.

Crossing the Street to Board or Exit the Bus
1. Always Cross in Front of the Bus
   - Walk at least 10 feet in front of the bus so the driver can see you.
2. Wait for the Driver's Signal
   - Never cross the street behind the bus or without a clear signal from the bus driver.
3. Look Both Ways
   - Even after receiving the signal, look left, right, and left again before crossing.

After Exiting the Bus
- Walk directly home or to your designated safe location. Do not loiter near the bus stop or in the street.
- Use the same safety rules as when walking to the bus stop.

Red Light Crossing Instructions For All Students Walking to and from School or the Bus Stop
To stay safe when crossing streets with traffic signals (red, yellow, and green lights), follow these important steps:

1. Stop at the Curb or Edge of the Road
    - Always stop and wait before entering the crosswalk.
    - Stand on the sidewalk and stay at least one big step away from the edge of the road.
2. Wait for the "Walk" Signal
    - Only cross when the "WALK" symbol or a green walking person appears.
    - Do not start crossing if you see a flashing hand or the words “Don’t Walk.”
3. Look All Ways Before Crossing Even when you have the “WALK” signal:
    - Look left
    - Look right
    - Look left again
    - Then look behind you and in front for turning cars.Make eye contact with drivers to be sure they see you.
4. Walk—Don’t Run
    - Always walk across the street. Do not run, even if you're late.
    - Stay within the crosswalk lines.
5. If the Light Changes While You’re Crossing
    - Keep walking calmly to the other side. Do not turn back.
    - You have the legal right to finish crossing once you’ve started.

Extra Tips
- Never cross on a red light, even if there are no cars.
- Wait for the next "WALK" signal if the light is changing or flashing.
- If there's a crossing guard, always follow their directions.

Prior to departing on any school trip requiring bus transportation, all students will receive safety instruction that includes, at a minimum, the location of emergency exits, the location and proper use of emergency equipment, and the responsibilities of students seated next to an emergency exit. (EC 39831.5)

BEHAVIOR AND STUDENT CONDUCT

Assignments During Suspension

When a student is suspended from class, the teacher of that class may require the student to complete any missed assignments or tests during the period of suspension. In addition, if a student is suspended from school for two or more days, the teacher is required to provide the student with any homework that would have otherwise been assigned upon the request of the student, parent, or another individual holding educational rights. If the student submits the completed assignments, either upon returning to school or by the original deadline set by the teacher, whichever occurs later, and the assignments are not graded before the end of the academic term, they shall not be factored into the student’s overall grade for the class. (EC 48913.5)

Behavior Expectations

Desert Sands Unified School District is committed to maintaining a safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Desert Sands Unified School District believes that fostering high behavioral expectations, using effective classroom and schoolwide management strategies, implementing appropriate interventions and supports, fostering inclusive and safe environments, and encouraging active parent and guardian involvement are essential components in minimizing the need for disciplinary actions that remove students from the learning environment. The safety of students and staff, as well as the preservation of a positive, orderly school environment, will always be guiding priorities in determining appropriate disciplinary responses. Whenever feasible, staff are encouraged to use strategies that keep students engaged in learning and support positive behavior change.

Exclusionary discipline practices, such as detention, suspension, or expulsion, that may result in the loss of instructional time, will be used only when mandated by law, permitted under Board policy, or when documented attempts at alternative means of correction have been unsuccessful. This approach reflects the District's belief that instructional inclusion, behavioral support, and equity in discipline are essential to student growth and long-term success.

Desert Sands Unified School District requires that each school site and every classroom teacher have clearly established behavior expectations aligned with Board policy and applicable state and federal laws. All staff are expected to enforce disciplinary rules and expectations consistently and fairly, in accordance with Desert Sands Unified School District commitment to nondiscrimination and equity. Students are expected to demonstrate responsible behavior at all times, including:

- While traveling to and from school
- In the classroom and other school buildings
- On school grounds
- During school-sponsored events, whether on or off campus
- While riding the school bus or other school-provided transportation.

Students are required to follow school rules, promptly obey the directions of teachers and school staff, remain diligent in their studies, and treat all members of the school community with kindness, courtesy, and respect. The use of profane, vulgar, or disrespectful language is strictly prohibited. (BP 5144)

Involvement Of Law Enforcement

Desert Sands Unified School District is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for all students and staff. In accordance with state law, the Desert Sands Unified School District is required to notify law enforcement authorities when certain serious infractions occur on school grounds or during school-sponsored activities. Specifically, any school employee who is attacked, assaulted, or physically threatened by a student must immediately report the incident to the appropriate law enforcement agency. In addition, the principal or designee is required to notify law enforcement authorities, within legally prescribed timelines, of student conduct related to the following:

1. Assault with a deadly weapon or instrument
2. Assault with force likely to produce serious bodily injury, as defined by Penal Code (PC) 245
3. Sexual battery or sexual assault
4. Possession, use, or sale of controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, or intoxicants
5. Possession of firearms or explosives
6. Possession of dangerous objects or weapons, including but not limited to:
    - A dirk, dagger, or ice pick

- Any knife with a blade longer than 2½ inches
- A folding knife with a blade that locks into place
- A razor with an unguarded blade
- A taser or stun gun, as defined in Penal Code 244.5(a)
- Any device that expels a metallic projectile, such as a BB or pellet gun, powered by air pressure, CO_2, or spring action
- A spot marker gun

When an act subject to mandatory reporting is committed by a student with an IEP or Section 504 Plan, the principal or designee must ensure that copies of the student's IEP or 504 Plan and disciplinary records are provided to the responding law enforcement authorities. This information must be shared in compliance with applicable state and federal laws and is intended to support law enforcement in addressing the student's unique needs appropriately. For questions about mandatory reporting procedures, contact Al Bennett, Director of Child Welfare and Attendance, Alpercy.Bennettjr@desertsands.us (EC 35291, 44014, 48902, 48980, 49393, PC 245)

Property Loss Or Damage

Desert Sands Unified School District may seek reimbursement when Desert Sands Unified School District property is damaged, destroyed, or not returned due to a student's willful misconduct, consistent with state law. Parents/guardians may be held financially liable for the reasonable cost of repairing or replacing books, supplies, devices, materials, or other Desert Sands Unified School District property loaned to the student.

If a parent/guardian is unable to pay for the damage or to return the property, the Desert Sands Unified School District will offer the student a voluntary work program in lieu of monetary payment. Until restitution is paid or the voluntary work has been completed, Desert Sands Unified School District may withhold the student's grades, diploma, and/or transcript. Desert Sands Unified School District will provide written notice to the parent/guardian describing the alleged misconduct, the basis for the charge, and the amount owed. Communications regarding debt collection will be directed only to the parent/guardian, not the student. Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken as permitted by law; however, such discipline shall not be academically punitive.(BP 3515.4, AR 3515.4, AR 5125.2, BP 6161.2)

Suspension And Expulsion

The Governing Board desires to provide district students access to educational opportunities in an orderly school environment that protects their safety and security, ensures their welfare and well-being, and promotes their learning and development. The Board shall develop rules and regulations setting the standards of behavior expected of district students and the disciplinary processes and procedures for addressing violations of those standards, including suspension and/or expulsion.

The grounds for suspension and expulsion and the procedures for considering, recommending, and/or implementing suspension and expulsion shall be only those specified in law, in this policy, and in the accompanying administrative regulation.

Except when otherwise permitted by law, a student may be suspended or expelled only when the behavior is related to a school activity or school attendance occurring within any district school or another school district, regardless of when it occurs, including, but not limited to, the following: (EC 48900(s))

1. While on school grounds
2. While going to or coming from school
3. During the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus
4. During, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity

District staff shall enforce the rules concerning suspension and expulsion of students fairly, consistently, equally, and in accordance with the district's nondiscrimination policies.

A student at any grade level may be suspended from school or recommended for expulsion for committing any of the following acts that are related to a school activity or school attendance:

EC 48900

a(1). Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
a(2). Willfully used force or violence upon another person, except in self-defense.
b. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object.
c. Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind. *(Note: Students who voluntarily disclose their use of a controlled substance, alcohol, or other intoxicant to seek help through services or supports shall not be suspended solely for that disclosure.)*
d. Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the same as such controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant.
e. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
f. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
g. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
h. Possessed or used tobacco, or products containing tobacco or nicotine products. *(Note: Students who voluntarily disclose their use of a tobacco product to seek help through services or support shall not be suspended solely for that disclosure.)*
i. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
j. Unlawfully possessed, offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia.
l. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
m. Possessed an imitation firearm. *Imitation firearm means a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.*
n. Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault or committed a sexual battery.
o. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
p. Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
q. Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing. *Hazing means a method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is*

officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective student.

r. Engaged in an act of bullying.

1. *Bullying means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, directed toward one or more students that has or can reasonably be predicted to have the effect of (refer to EC 48900.2, 48900.3, or 48900.4 to define the nature of the bullying):*
   - i. *Placing a reasonable student in fear of harm to the student's person or property*
   - ii. *Causing the student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health*
   - iii. *Causing the student to experience substantial interferences with the student's academic performance or ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.*
   - iv. *(Refer to EC 48900(r)(3) for the definition of "reasonable pupil.")*
2. *Bullying also includes an act of cyber sexual bullying by a student through the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording that depicts a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of an identifiable minor, when such dissemination is to another student or to school personnel by means of an electronic act and has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects of bullying described above. Cyber sexual bullying does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.*

t. Aided or abetted the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury on another person.

EC 48900.7: Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property. *A terrorist threat includes any written or oral statement by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death or great bodily injury to another person or property damage in excess of $1,000, with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out.*

Additional grounds for suspension and expulsion for students in grades 4 through 12 include:

1. EC 48900.2 – Committed sexual harassment. *Sexual harassment means conduct which, when considered from the perspective of a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim, to be sufficiently severe or pervasive as to have a negative impact one the victim's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.*
2. EC 48900.3 – Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence. *Hate violence includes injuring or intimidating a victim, interfering with the exercise of a victim's civil rights, or damaging a victim's property because of the victim's race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation; a perception of the presence of any of those characteristics in the victim; or the victim's association with a person or group with one or more of those actual or perceived characteristics.*
3. EC 48900.4 – Intentionally Engaged in an act of harassment, threats or intimidation. *Acts or statements directed against school/district personnel or pupils, that is/are sufficiently severe or pervasive to have the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting classwork, creating substantial disorder, and invading the rights of either school personnel or pupils by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment.*

A student's parents/guardians shall be notified as soon as possible when there is an escalating pattern of misbehavior that could lead to on-campus or off-campus suspension.

Students shall not be suspended or expelled for truancy, tardiness, or absenteeism from assigned school activities.

Except where a supervised suspension is permitted by law for a student's first offense, supervised suspension shall be imposed only when other means of correction have failed to bring about proper conduct. (EC 48900.5)

Recommendations to Expel

The principal or superintendent of schools shall immediately suspend and shall recommend expulsion of a student who is determined to have committed any of the following acts at school or at a school activity off school grounds (EC 48915 (c)):

(1) Possessing, selling, or otherwise furnishing a firearm.
(2) Brandishing a knife at another person
(3) Unlawfully selling a controlled substance.
(4) Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery.
(5) Possessing an explosive.

The principal or the superintendent of schools is also required to recommend the expulsion of a student for any of the following acts committed at school or at a school activity off school grounds, unless the principal or superintendent determines that expulsion should not be recommended under the circumstances or that an alternative means of correction would address the conduct (EC 48915(a)(1))

(A) Causing serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense
(B) Possession of any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student
(C) Unlawful possession of any controlled substance, except the first possession of not more than one avoirdupois ounce of marijuana other than concentrated cannabis or possession of over-the-counter medication/medication prescribed for use by the student for use by the student
(D) Robbery of extortion
(E) Assault or Battery upon any school employee, as defined in Penal Code 240 and 242

For all other violations listed in the accompanying administrative regulation, the Superintendent or principal shall have the discretion to recommend expulsion of a student. If expulsion is recommended, the Board shall order the student expelled only if it makes a finding of either or both of the following: (EC 48915(b) and (e))

1. That other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct

2. That due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or others

A vote to expel a student shall be taken in an open session of a Board meeting.

The Board may vote to suspend the enforcement of the expulsion order pursuant to the requirements of law and the accompanying administrative regulation. (EC 48917)

No student shall be expelled for disruption or willful defiance. (EC 48900)

No child enrolled in a preschool program shall be expelled except under limited circumstances as specified in AR 5148.3 - Preschool/Early Childhood Education.

Suspension From School

A student may not be suspended for more than five consecutive school days at a time. During a single school year, the maximum total number of suspension days is 20. However, if a student transfers to another school within the same school year, up to 10 additional days of suspension may be permitted to support the student's adjustment to the new setting. In such cases, the maximum allowable number of suspension days for the year increases to 30. A principal or their designee who decides to suspend a student must follow procedures that safeguard the student's right to due process.

Before a suspension is imposed, the student will participate in an informal conference with the principal or designee. This conference may only be waived in case of emergency. During this meeting, the student will be:

- Informed of the specific reason for the proposed disciplinary action;
- Informed of the other means of correction that were attempted before the recommendation for suspension;
- Presented with the evidence against them, and
- Allowed to respond and present their version of events or any evidence in their defense.

At the time a suspension is issued, the school will make a reasonable effort to notify the parents/guardians in a timely manner, and a written notice will be provided. If the student is a foster youth, any discipline notifications provided to the parent are also required to be provided to the foster youth's county social worker, court-appointed attorney, and educational rights holder; for an Indian child, the notification is provided to the Indian child's tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker.

If a student is suspended without a conference before suspension, the student and parent or guardian, or, if the student is a foster child, the foster child's educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, or, if the student is an Indian child, as defined in Section 224.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the Indian child's tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker shall be notified of the right to a conference and the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference. The conference shall be held within two school days, unless the student waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason, including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization. The conference shall then be held as soon as the student is physically able to return to school for the conference.

School staff may request a parent conference to discuss the cause and circumstances of the suspension, review applicable school policies, and identify appropriate next steps or supports. Parents/guardians are expected to respond promptly to such a request. However, a student may not be denied readmission to school solely because the parent/guardian fails to attend the meeting. (EC 35291, 48911, 48980(a))

For a full explanation of disciplinary procedures please view BP 5144.1/AR 5144.1 and AR 5144.2.

Teacher Suspension From Class

A classroom teacher may suspend a student from their class only after other means of correction have failed to bring about proper conduct. A teacher suspension from that teacher's class may be for the remainder of the day and the following school day for-any of the acts specified in EC 48900 and listed as items #1-18 under "Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion: Grades K-12". In addition to removing the student from class, the teacher may also refer the student to the principal or designee for possible suspension from school.

During this time, the student shall not be placed in another regular classroom as a substitute placement. However, if the student is enrolled in multiple classes, they may attend their other regularly scheduled classes. The teacher may require the student to complete any assignments or tests that were missed during the suspension period.

As soon as reasonably possible, the teacher is required to contact the parent and request a parent-teacher conference to discuss the circumstances and reason for the student's suspension. At the discretion of the school, a counselor or school psychologist may participate in the meeting, and an administrator will attend if requested by either the parent or teacher. (EC 48910, EC 48900)

RECORDS

Access by Military Recruiters

Federal law requires Desert Sands Unified School District to provide military recruiters with secondary students' names, addresses, and telephone numbers upon request. Students or parents who do not wish to have this information released may opt out by submitting a written request to their student's assigned school site. (BP 5125.1)

Access to Student Records

Access includes inspection, review, requests for and receipt of copies, and oral communication of information from a student record. Each record contains an access log that identifies individuals or entities who have requested or received information, along with the legitimate educational interest that supports the request. The log is accessible only to the parent/guardian, a student age 16 or older or who has completed the 10th grade, the custodian of records, and authorized state or federal officials.

When a student turns 18 years of age, FERPA rights transfer from the parent to the student. However, parents may continue to access records if the student is claimed as a dependent for federal tax purposes. Noncustodial parents retain the same access rights unless restricted by court order.

School officials and employees with a legitimate educational interest may access student records without prior consent when necessary to fulfill professional responsibilities, including providing services to the student, reviewing or analyzing student data, or coordinating educational programs or interventions. "School officials" includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, and service providers performing Desert Sands Unified School District functions under the Desert Sands Unified School District direct control.

Upon request from officials of another school, district, or postsecondary institution in which a student seeks, intends to enroll, or is already enrolled, the Desert Sands Unified School District-may disclose educational records without parental consent for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer. A student's citizenship status, immigration status, place of birth, or any information

indicating national origin will not be released without parental consent or a court order. To the extent practicable, staff will not disclose or provide in writing, verbally, or in any other manner, to an officer or employee of an agency conducting immigration enforcement the education records of or any information about a student or their family and household (*e.g.,* information about a student's home or travel schedule), unless staff receive written parent consent or are presented with a valid judicial warrant/subpoena or court.

Parents/guardians have the right to:

1. Inspect and review records maintained by the school.
2. Request amendment of records believed to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights.
3. Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information, except where law authorizes disclosure without consent. Parents may request copies of any records disclosed.
4. File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education regarding alleged FERPA violations:
   U.S. Department of Education
   Student Privacy Policy Office
   400 Maryland Ave. SW
   Washington, D.C. 20202-8520
   Email: FERPA.Complaints@ed.gov

A written request to inspect or obtain student records must be submitted to Liliana Carmona at liliana.carmona@desertsands.us and Jacqueline Dominguez at jacqueline.dominguez@desertsands.us, however Al Bennett, Director of Child Welfare and Attendance is the custodian of records for Desert Sands Unified School District. For students with Individualized Educational Programs (IEP) email sped.records@desertsands.us. Records will be made available within five (5) business days of the Desert Sands Unified School District receipt of the request, during regular school hours. Qualified staff will be available to interpret records upon request. (BP 5125, AR 5125, BP 1445, AR 1445)

CAL GRANT Program

A Cal Grant is a California financial aid award that does not require repayment. To qualify, students must meet eligibility, financial, and minimum grade point average (GPA) requirements. Cal Grants may be used at the University of California, California State University, California Community Colleges, and many independent, career, or technical colleges in California.
Students must submit the FAFSA or CA Dream Act Application by the annual deadline and meet all program requirements. To support access to financial aid, all 12th-grade students are automatically considered Cal Grant applicants, and each student's GPA is electronically submitted to the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) by October 1 by the school or Desert Sands Unified School District.

Upon implementation of transcript-informed student accounts for grades 9–12 on the CaliforniaColleges.edu platform, any GPA data required for financial aid eligibility will be submitted through the California College Guidance Initiative. Notification explaining Cal Grant processes and the opportunity to opt out will be provided to all students and their parents or guardians by January 1 of the student's 11th-grade year.

A student, or the parent/guardian of a student under 18, may submit an opt-out form indicating that the student's GPA should not be electronically sent to CSAC. Only the parent/guardian may opt out for students before the age of 18. For students 18 and older, only the student may opt out and may opt back in if previously opted out by a parent.

California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI)

The California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI) is a statewide effort to ensure that all California students—particularly those historically underrepresented in higher education—can transition smoothly from K–12 to college and career. CCGI manages CaliforniaColleges.edu, the state's official college and career planning platform, which is free to all students in grades 6–12 and their families. The platform provides tools to help students explore careers, plan coursework, and apply to California public colleges and universities.

To support these services, data for all students enrolled in grades 6–12 will:

1. Be shared with the CCGI.
2. Be used to provide students and families with direct access to online college and career planning tools and resources.
3. Enable students to electronically transmit information shared with the CCGI to:
    - Postsecondary educational institutions for admissions and academic placement; and
    - The California Student Aid Commission for determining financial aid eligibility and supporting uptake of available aid.

Through this integrated approach, CCGI strengthens college and career readiness across California and supports students in making informed, individualized decisions about their educational futures.

Challenging a Student Record

Following inspection and review of student records, a parent/guardian may challenge the content of the records and/or request that information be corrected or removed. A written challenge must be submitted to Al Bennett, Desert Sands Unified School District, Director of Child Welfare and Attendance, alpercy.bennettjr@desertsands.us and may allege that the information is:

1. Inaccurate
2. An unsubstantiated personal conclusion or inference
3. A conclusion or inference outside the observer's competence
4. Not based on the personal observation of a named individual with the time and place noted
5. Misleading
6. A violation of the student's privacy or other rights

Within 30 calendar days of receiving the written challenge, the Superintendent or designee will meet with the parent/guardian and the certificated employee who recorded the information (if still employed by the Desert Sands Unified School District and will either sustain or deny the allegations.

- If the allegations are sustained, the Superintendent or designee will order the correction, removal, or destruction of the information.
- If the allegations are denied, the parent/guardian may appeal to the Governing Board within 30 calendar days. The Board will determine whether to sustain or deny the challenge.

If the Board denies the challenge, or if the parent/guardian chooses not to appeal a denial by the Superintendent, the parent/guardian has the right to submit a written statement of objections, which will become part of the student's record and will remain with the contested information until/if the information is removed. The Superintendent and/or the Board may appoint a hearing panel, pursuant to EC 49070–49071, to assist in the decision-making process.

If the challenge concerns a student's grade, the teacher who assigned the grade will be provided an opportunity to explain, orally and/or in writing, the basis for the grade. The teacher will be included in discussions related to any grade change whenever practicable. Under state law, a teacher's

determination of a student's grade is final, except in cases of clerical or mechanical error, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence. (AR 5125.3)

Directory Information

"Directory information" is student information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. It may include a student's name, address, telephone number, email address, date of birth, participation in activities and sports, dates of attendance, major field of study, weight and height of athletic team members, awards received, most recent school attended, and a student identifier that cannot be used to access educational records without a password. Directory information does not include Social Security numbers, citizenship or immigration status, place of birth, or other information indicating national origin.

Directory information is used for school publications such as yearbooks, honor rolls, performance programs, and athletic rosters. The Desert Sands Unified School District also authorizes the release of directory information to the following individuals or organizations, including but are not limited to Companies that Manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. Directory information will not be released to private profit-making entities except employers, prospective employers, or news media representatives. For students identified as experiencing homelessness, directory information will not be released without written consent. However, it may be shared to provide free medical, dental, or vision services to students experiencing homelessness, as allowed by law. Parents/guardians may opt out of sharing student information for this purpose by contacting Francesca Camarena, Foster/Homeless Youth Liaison at (760)771-8652.

Parents/guardians may opt out of directory information release by submitting a written request to the principal. Upon written request, the Desert Sands Unified School District will not include parent or student information in Governing Board meeting minutes.

Except where permitted by FERPA, California law, or the directory information rules above, the Desert Sands Unified School District requires written consent before releasing personally identifiable student information and will not release information for immigration-enforcement purposes unless required by law.

Any data released without consent must be stripped of personally identifiable information so that a student cannot be identified.

Duplication of Student Records

Parents/guardians may receive copies of student records at no cost. Fees may be waived if the parent/guardian can demonstrate that they would prevent access to the records. Former students may receive up to two transcripts or two record verifications at no cost.

Maintenance of Student Records

Desert Sands Unified School District maintains a cumulative record of each student's educational history. Student records include any information—written, digital, or otherwise—directly related to an identifiable student and kept for review. Active records are kept at the student's school while inactive records are stored at (include location). State and federal law require Desert Sands Unified School District to keep certain mandatory permanent records indefinitely, including: legal name, date/place of birth and verification, sex, enrollment dates, courses taken, grades/credits, immunization verification, graduation date or equivalent, and parent and student addresses with annual residency

verification. Non-permanent records are reviewed annually and destroyed securely when no longer needed.

Desert Sands Unified School District does not collect Social Security numbers or citizenship/immigration information from students or their families unless required by law or to determine eligibility for a federal or state benefit program.

Al Bennett, Director of Child Welfare and Attendance serves as the custodian of records for Desert Sands Unified School District, and each principal is the custodian for their school. Custodians ensure student privacy and allow access to records only by authorized individuals.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) gives parents the right to:

- Consent before their child participates in any survey partially or wholly funded by the U.S. Department of Education that asks about political beliefs, mental health, sexual behavior, illegal or demeaning behavior, family relationships, privileged relationships, religious beliefs, or income (unless required for program eligibility).
- Opt-out of any other survey covering these topics, regardless of funding, any non-emergency, invasive physical exam required for attendance (except screenings required or permitted by law), or any activity that collects or uses student information for marketing or selling data.
- Inspect, upon request, and before administration or use, surveys, data-collection instruments, and instructional materials that seek protected information created by a third-party, instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes, and instructional materials used as part of the curriculum.

These rights are transferred to students at age 18 or when they become emancipated. Desert Sands Unified School District notifies parents annually, before students participate in covered surveys or activities, and provides an opportunity for parents to review the materials and opt out. Desert Sands Unified School District will notify parents at the beginning of the school year if it has identified specific or approximate dates for activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year begins, parents will be provided with reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and will be given the opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys.

Parents/guardians who believe their rights were violated may submit a PPRA complaint to the U.S. Department of Education at PPRA.Complaints@ed.gov or mail it to the Student Privacy Policy Office, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-8520.

Student Records from Social Media

Desert Sands Unified School District maintains a program that collects and stores student information from social media only when it is directly related to school or student safety. “Social media” includes electronic services, accounts, and content such as photos, videos, blogs, messages, email, and online profiles. Any information collected from social media is destroyed within one year after the student turns 18 or within one year after the student is no longer enrolled in the Desert Sand Unified School District, whichever occurs first.

Students or parents may request to review, correct, or remove any social media information contained in the student’s record by submitting a written request to Al Bennett, Director of Child

Welfare and Attendance, alpercy.bennettjr@desertsands.us. Access to records will be provided within five business days of receiving the request.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

California Kids Investment and Development Savings Program

The California Kids Investment and Development Savings Program (CalKIDS) is a statewide initiative created with the goal of helping families take the first step toward saving for college or career training. It automatically awards scholarships to eligible students to cover qualified education expenses such as tuition and fees, required books and supplies, and computer equipment, helping to reduce financial barriers for parents

Every eligible public school student in grades 1–12 has a CalKIDS account created in their name with a deposit of $500. Eligible students identified as foster youth receive an additional one-time $500 deposit. Eligible students identified as a student experiencing homelessness receive an additional one-time $500 deposit. This could mean up to $1,500 in scholarship money for students!

To be eligible and automatically enrolled in CalKIDS, students must be identified as English Learner or low-income by the Local Control Funding Formula on Fall Census Day and either:

1. Enrolled in grades 1-12 during the 2021-22 academic year; or
2. Enrolled in 1st grade during the 2022-23 academic year.

Visit https://calkids.org/ to find out more information about CalKIDS, check eligibility, register the account, and/or submit a claim. The CalKIDS account is accessible by using the student's Statewide Student Identifier (SSID), which can be found on a student's school portal, transcript, report card, or by contacting the school.

Investment in Higher Education

Pursuing a college or university education offers numerous long-term benefits, including increased earning potential, expanded career opportunities, financial security, enhanced problem-solving abilities, and improved overall health and well-being. However, the rising cost of higher education can be a significant barrier for many families. To support long-term college affordability and minimize the burden of student loan debt, parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to begin saving for college as early as possible, even during infancy. Early investment provides the most significant opportunity for funds to grow over time.

There are a variety of college savings options available to families, including but not limited to:

- 529 College Savings Plans
- Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA or Roth IRA)
- Uniform Gift to Minors Act (UGMA) or Uniform Transfer to Minors Act (UTMA) accounts
- Trust funds
- U.S. Savings Bonds

In addition to family savings, students can actively contribute to college affordability by applying for scholarships and grants, enrolling in Advanced Placement (AP) or dual enrollment courses to earn college credit while in high school, working a full-time job during the summer or a part-time job during the school year, or opening and contributing to a personal savings account. Planning and engaging

in proactive financial preparation can significantly reduce future debt and expand educational choices for students. For more information about college savings options, families are encouraged to consult with a trusted financial advisor or visit www.savingforcollege.com or www.scholarshare529.com.

Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Appendix B - Title I LEA- Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Title I LEA-Level Parent and Family

Engagement Policy Desert Sands Unified

School District

January 25, 2021

1.0 The local governing board of each local educational agency (LEA), or agency, receiving Title I, Part A funding shall establish and implement a written parent and family engagement policy and program. (California EC [EC] sections [§§] 11500-11504, 51101[b]; 20 United States Code [U.S.C.] § 6318[a][1], 6318[a][2])

1.1 Desert Sands Unified School District has received input from parents and community stakeholders and has developed and distributed to, parents and family members of participating children, an LEA-level written parent and family engagement policy. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2]).])

Input is gathered through parent/guardian surveys, LCAP Advisory Committee, and the DSUSD district parent advisory committees (District Advisory Committee (DAC), District English Learner Advisory (DELAC), Migrant Parent Advisory Committee, Native American Parent Advisory Committee, African American Parent Advisory Committee (AAPAC), Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC). Desert Sands Unified School District (DSUSD), with parents and family members, has jointly developed, mutually agreed upon, and distributed to, parents and family members of participating children served under Title I, Part A a written Local Educational Agency (LEA) parent and family engagement policy. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2]).]) The policy is distributed to families through School Messenger, Peach Jar, site newsletters, and posted on the district's website.

The LEA incorporates the Parent and Family Engagement Policy into the LEA level plan. (20 U.S.C. § 6312, 6318[a][2]) The Desert Sands Unified School District includes family engagement activities in the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). These actions and services, and expenditures addressing family engagement, include meaningful participation and opportunities to provide input on decisions. Actions and strategies are also included in the LCAP Federal Addendum.

To involve parents and family members in the Title I program at Desert Sands Unified School District, the following practices have been established:

a. The Desert Sands Unified School District involves parents and family members in the joint development of the agency's plan, and in the development of support and improvement plans. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][A])

The Desert Sands Unified School District annually surveys parents and family members to gather feedback about successes and areas of improvement around the LCAP, the LCAP Federal Addendum, as well as school goals and actions. Stakeholder feedback is also gathered at school meetings, and district and school advisory committee meetings. The

information gathered is used to revise the district's LCAP, the LCAP Federal Addendum, and the sites' School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA).

District staff work collaboratively with site administrators to plan and implement parent and family engagement activities. Site principals collaborate together to plan and coordinate activities and best practices. Activities include Coffee with the Principal, Literacy/Math nights, parent Information nights and workshops and family events. Activities for each site are described in the school's Parent and Family Engagement Policy, school-parent compact, and are included in the School Plan for Student Achievement.

b. Desert Sands Unified School District provides the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools within the LEA in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance, and how this may include meaningful consultation with various stakeholders (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][B]).

District staff work collaboratively with site administrators to plan and implement parent professional development and annual training opportunities for English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), Title I and School Site Council (SSC).

c. The LEA coordinates and integrates Title I, Part A parent and family engagement strategies with parent and family engagement strategies, to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][C])

Parent and family engagement activities for programs, including State Preschool, English Learners, after school programs (ASES) and Special Education are coordinated with those offered through Title 1, Part A.

d. The LEA conducts, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under Title I, Part A. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][D]) The Desert Sands Unified School District annually gathers input and feedback from the LCAP Advisory Committee, and the DSUSD district parent advisory committees (District Advisory Committee (DAC), District English Learner Advisory (DELAC), Migrant Parent Advisory Committee, Native American Parent Advisory Committee, African American Parent Advisory Committee (AAPAC) to evaluate the effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy.

The LEA identifies the following:

1. Barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][D][i])

The Desert Sands Unified School District identifies barriers through the annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy. Processes and actions are put into place to address the needs of families and to ensure information is provided in a language and format easily understood by families.

2. The needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][D][ii])

Parent-teacher conferences and parent workshops are offered to further support families with strategies to engage with the school. Strategies include:

a. Questions to ask during parent conferences,

b. How to contact their child's teacher, and

c. Assistance with completing school forms, surveys and College and Career Readiness documents and accessing Parent VUE

3. Strategies to support successful school and family interactions. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][D][iii])

Each school develops a site parent and family engagement policy and school parent compact designed to meet the needs of their families. Schools host family information nights, such as Math or Literacy Nights, informal meetings with the principal, and other opportunities for families to engage with the staff. The compact describes how families and school staff share the responsibility for improving student achievement and how the school and families will collaborate to assist students to achieve the state academic standards.

a. The LEA uses the findings of such evaluation in section 1.1(d) of the CE program instrument to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parent and family engagement policy. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][E])

The results of the annual evaluation from the sites are used to design evidenced-based strategies to improve family engagement, and revise the Parent and Family Engagement Policy, as needed. Through the annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy, processes and actions are put into place to address the needs of families and to ensure information is provided in a language and format easily understood by families. The Desert Sands Unified School District annually gathers input and feedback from district advisory committees to continue to revise the Parent and Family Engagement Policy as needed.

b. The LEA involves parents in activities of schools served under Title I, Part A to adequately represent the needs of the population served by such agency for the purposes of developing, revising, and reviewing the Parent and Family Engagement Policy. (20U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][F])

Each school designates family members to serve on the District Advisory Committee (DAC) and the District English Learner Committee (DELAC). The DAC, DELAC, Migrant PAC, and the African American and Native American Education Program PACs review a variety of data sources and provide input and feedback using this information to develop, revise and review the Parent and Family Engagement Policy.

1.2 The LEA policy on parent and family engagement for all schools (including Title I and non-Title I) in the LEA shall be consistent with the goals and purposes listed below. (EC §§ 11502, 11504, 11506)

a. Engage parents and family members positively in their children's education by providing assistance and training on topics such as state academic standards and assessments to develop knowledge and skills to use at home to support their children's academic efforts at

school and their children's development as responsible future members of our society. (EC § 11502[a])

All schools develop site parent and family engagement plans to address the needs of parents at their school. Each school offers parent and family engagement activities to assist families with supporting learning at home. Information and resources are shared with families at parent information nights, CAASPP workshops, Title I parent information nights, Literacy and Math nights, parent-teacher conferences, parent workshops, as well as on the website and materials sent home.

b. Inform parents that they can directly affect the success of their children's learning, by providing parents with techniques and strategies that they may utilize to improve their children's academic success and to assist their children in learning at home. (EC §11502[b])

c. Information and resources are provided to parents on strategies to assist their children's learning at home through parent outreach through parent meetings and family nights as well as through community partnerships and workshops that directly support parents with techniques and strategies to help improve their child's academic, social and emotional health and success. Parent and family education are communicated through social media as well as posted on our district website.

d. Build consistent and effective two-way communication between family members and the school so that parents and family members may know when and how to assist their children in support of classroom learning activities. (EC § 11502[c])

The Desert Sands Unified School District has implemented an effective two-way communication tool that allows for text, email, phone calls and document sharing as a response to parent feedback. The district and school communicate to families on a regular basis to share information and resources on ways to support their students' education. Information about the effectiveness of communication at each site is contained in the annual LCAP survey and used to improve services annually.

e. Train teachers, school administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, and other staff to communicate effectively with parents as equal partners. (EC § 11502[d])

District leadership provides resources, professional development and information to school site administration, support staff and teachers for effectively communicating with families.

f. Integrate and coordinate parent and family engagement activities with the local control and accountability plan (LCAP), as applicable, with other programs. (EC § 11502[e])

Each site annually develops a School Plan for Student Achievement which include goals, actions, strategies and expenditures for family engagement in addition to goals to improve academic achievement and the learning environment. Parent and family engagement activities for programs, State Preschools, English Learners, after school programs (ASES) and Special Education are coordinated with those offered through Title 1, Part A.

1.3 Parents and family members of children receiving Title I, Part A services shall be involved in the decisions regarding how funds reserved are allotted for parental involvement activities. (20 U.S.C. Section 6318[a][3][B])

The Desert Sands Unified School District reserves at least one percent of the Title I, Part A allocation to support district-wide family engagement activities. Family engagement activities are included in the district's LCAP and the LCAP Federal Addendum.

1.4 Funds reserved by an LEA shall be used to carry out activities and strategies consistent with the LEA's Parent and Family Engagement Policy, including not less than one of the following: (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D])

a. Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for LEA and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D][i])

b. Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D][ii])

c. Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D][iii])

d. Collaborating, or providing sub grants to schools to enable such schools to collaborate, with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D][iv])

e. Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the LEA determines are appropriate and consistent with such agency's Parent and Family Engagement Policy. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D][v])

Each school designates a SSC and ELAC representative who serves on the district's DAC and DELAC. The committees review input gathered from stakeholders about family engagement activities, parent workshops, professional development, home to school communication and attendance and engagement. This information is used to annually update the LCAP, including actions and services for family engagement, parent workshops and professional development.

**The Parent and Family Engagement Policy will be reviewed and included in the annual review of the Local Control and Accountability Plan Federal Addendum.*

***The policy will be updated periodically to meet changing needs of parents and family members and the LEA. The LEA will maintain a process for involving parents and family members in planning and designing the school's programs and will include adequate representation of parents and family members of children receiving Title I, Part A services.*

Desert Sands Unified School District's Title I, Part A LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy was developed jointly and agreed on with parents and family members of children participating in Title I, Part A programs on 1/25/2021. The LEA will distribute the Policy to all parents and family members of participating Title I, Part A students annually on or before September 1st.

Professional Qualifications

Parents/guardians of students attending a school that receives Title I funds have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers. Upon request, Desert Sands Unified School District will provide, at a minimum:

1. Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing requirements for the grade levels and subject areas taught.
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency permit or other provisional status for which State qualifications or licensing requirements have been waived.
3. Whether the teacher is teaching within the field of discipline of their certification.
4. Whether the student receives instructional support from paraprofessionals, and, if so, the qualifications of those individuals.

In addition, Title I schools will provide to the parent/guardians information on each child's achievement and academic growth, when available, on required State academic assessments; and timely notice when their child has been assigned to, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements for the grade level and subject area assigned.

Rights of Parents

Parents and guardians are essential partners in their child's education. Except as provided by law, parents/guardians of students enrolled in public schools have the right—and should have meaningful opportunities—to be informed and to participate in their child's educational experience in the following ways:

1. Classroom Observation: To observe their child's current classroom, or classrooms in schools under consideration for enrollment, upon request and in accordance with district visitation guidelines.
2. Meetings With School Staff: To meet with their child's teacher(s) and the principal within a reasonable period after making a request.
3. Volunteering: To volunteer time and resources to support school programs and facilities in accordance with district volunteer procedures. Primary instructional responsibility remains with the teacher.
4. Absence Notification: To be promptly notified when their child is absent from school without permission.
5. Assessment Results: To receive the results of their child's performance on standardized and statewide assessments, and to receive information about how the school performed on these assessments.
6. School Selection Requests: To request a specific school for their child and receive a response from Desert Sands Unified School District (though approval is not guaranteed).
7. Safe School Environment: To have their child learn in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment.
8. Access to Curriculum: To examine curriculum materials used in their child's classes.
9. Progress Information: To be informed of their child's academic progress and to know whom to contact if concerns arise.
10. Educational Records: To review their child's school records.
11. Academic Expectations: To receive information about the standards, proficiencies, and academic skills their child is expected to achieve.
12. School Policies: To be informed in advance about school rules, including discipline, attendance expectations, dress codes, and procedures for visiting the school.
13. Psychological Testing: To receive notice of any psychological testing involving their child and the right to refuse consent.

14. Participation in School Organizations: To participate on parent advisory committees, School site Councils, or site-based leadership teams, consistent with applicable rules. School site councils are encouraged to host biannual open forums for parent engagement.
15. Challenging Records: To challenge information in their child's records that they believe is inaccurate, misleading, or a violation of privacy, and to receive a response from the school.
16. Retention/Promotion Notification: To be notified early in the school year if their child is identified as at risk for retention and to consult with staff regarding retention or promotion decisions, including the right to appeal.

A parent/guardian's lack of English fluency does not limit their ability to exercise their rights or participate in their child's education. Desert Sands Unified School District will take all reasonable steps, consistent with EC 48985, to ensure that parents/guardians who speak a language other than English receive notices of their rights and opportunities both in English and in their home language. Desert Sands Unified School District cannot authorize parent/guardian participation in a manner that conflicts with a valid restraining order, protective order, or custody/visitation order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction.

School Accountability Report Card

All California public schools must update and publish a School Accountability Report Card (SARC) by February 1 of each year. The purpose of the SARC is to provide parents/guardians and the public with meaningful information about each school's performance and progress toward its goals, enabling families to make informed comparisons and enrollment decisions. Each SARC includes data such as student demographics, school safety and climate information, academic performance and assessment results, graduation and school completion rates, class sizes, teacher and staff information, curriculum and instructional programs, college and career preparation indicators, and fiscal and expenditure information.
A school accountability report card is available to parents/guardians at their request. Please contact your child's school or the Educational Services Division at (760) 771-8602.

Student Wellness Policy

The District's Student Wellness Policy (BP 5030/AR 5030) is available for review on the District website. Information regarding the policy, updates, and opportunities for involvement will be posted annually on the District website.

TECHNOLOGY

Electronic Listening and Recording Devices

The use of any electronic listening or recording device in a classroom is prohibited unless the teacher and principal provide prior consent for an educational purpose. Unauthorized recording disrupts instruction and interferes with the learning environment. Any non-student who willfully violates this rule may be guilty of a misdemeanor. Students who violate this rule will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Devices and Wearable Technology Desert Sands Unified School District is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and academically honest learning environment. The use of personal technology devices equipped with artificial intelligence (AI),

including but not limited to smart glasses, wearable recording devices, or real-time AI-assisted tools, is subject to Desert Sands Unified School District regulations.

Students shall not use AI-enabled devices during the school day or at school-sponsored activities without prior permission from a certificated staff member and, when applicable, site administration. Authorized use may be permitted for instructional purposes, or as required pursuant to a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or documented medical need.

The use of AI-enabled devices is strictly prohibited when such use:

- Violates academic integrity, including unauthorized assistance during assignments, quizzes, or examinations;
- Involves recording, photographing, or capturing audio of any individual without their knowledge and consent, in accordance with applicable law and Desert Sands Unified School District's policy;
- Disrupts the instructional program or infringes upon the privacy or safety of students or staff.

Desert Sands Unified School District reserves the right to restrict or prohibit specific devices, applications, or uses of technology that pose a risk to student safety, privacy, or the integrity of the educational program.
Unauthorized use of AI-enabled devices may result in confiscation of the device and/or disciplinary action in accordance with Desert Sands Unified School District's policies and administrative regulations governing student conduct and use of technology. (EC 51512)

Electronic Products or Services that Disseminate Advertising

Desert Sands Unified School District may enter into contracts for electronic products or services that include the display or dissemination of advertising to students. If such products or services are used in the classroom or other learning environments, DSUSD will provide written notice to parents/guardians.

Internet Safety

Inappropriate use of the Internet and social media continues to be a growing concern nationwide. Schools across the country are seeing increased incidents of negative online behavior, including inappropriate posts, harmful messaging, and cyberbullying. The anonymity of online platforms can encourage students to say or do things they would not do in person, and some students hesitate to report cyberbullying for fear their Internet access will be restricted.

There have also been nationwide cases of online predators posing as youth to gain access to student chat rooms or social networking sites. Students who share personal information, such as photos, addresses, or schedules, may unintentionally place themselves at risk.

Desert Sands Unified School District uses Internet filters and monitoring tools on all District computers to block access to content that is obscene, harmful to minors, or otherwise inappropriate. Rules and procedures are in place to prevent unsafe or unauthorized online activity. DSUSD remains committed to providing a safe online environment at school, and parent/guardian involvement is essential to ensuring student safety at home.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to actively monitor their child's online presence, discuss safe Internet practices, and be aware that anything posted online can be publicly viewed. Most social

media platforms now include clear cyberbullying reporting procedures and tools within their terms of service. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to set expectations and guidelines for safe Internet use at home. Many cell phone and Internet service providers offer parental controls that can limit access, set usage times, and monitor activity; parents/guardians should contact their providers directly to learn about these options. Helpful resources include:

- Common Sense Media: https://www.commonsensemedia.org
- Safehouseproject.org: Parental Guide to Online Safety
- Be Internet Awesome with Google: Digital Safety Resources - Be Internet Awesome
- Net Cetera (FTC): https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0002-parents
- Web Wise Kids: http://www.webwisekids.org

Use of District Technology

Desert Sands Unified School District
Responsible Use Policy Agreement for Student Use of Technology Resources

The District authorizes students to use District Technology, as defined in Board Policy 6163.4 Student Use of Technology. Students may use District computers, network, Internet access, and other technology resources to conduct research, access resources, complete assignments, and communicate with others to promote educational excellence and innovation. Each student is responsible at all times for the proper use of these resources. Pursuant to District guidance, students may use artificial intelligence (AI) applications in which faculty or staff have received approval from the District and under the terms of the approved usage via parental permission.

This Responsible Use Policy (RUP) Agreement helps users follow good online practices. It prohibits unauthorized access and disclosure of sensitive information, and gives users tools and guidelines for safe and proper use of technology. As used in this policy, "user" includes anyone using computers, the District's computer network including servers and wireless computer networking technology (Wi-Fi), Internet, email, USB drives, wireless access points (routers), tablet computers, smartphones and smart devices, cell phones, wearable technology, any wireless communication device including emergency radios, and all other forms of electronic communication or equipment provided by the District (the "network") regardless of the physical location of the user. The RUP Agreement applies even when District-provided equipment (laptops, tablets, etc.) is used off District property. Additionally, the RUP Agreement applies when non-District devices are used to access the District network.

Privileges

Access is a privilege, not a right. School behavior rules apply to the use of technology. Just as students are responsible for good behavior in a classroom, or on school grounds, they must also be responsible when using District equipment, networks, or personal technologies.

If a student violates any of these rules, the District may terminate use and deny future access. Disciplinary action may also result. If possible criminal activity is discovered, law enforcement authorities will be notified. Student discipline may include suspension or expulsion under state law and District policy.

Privacy

The District uses technology protection measures to block access, as much as reasonably possible, to online material that is obscene, pornographic, or harmful to minors. The District filters users' online activities and accesses, reviews, saves, or deletes any communications or files and shares them with district and/or site administration and teachers as necessary. Users should have no expectation of privacy in their use of District technology, applications, software, equipment, or electronic communication. All passwords created for or used on any District technology are the property of the District. Use of a password does not create a reasonable expectation of privacy. The District works to secure the network against potential cyber security threats. Repeated attempts at bypassing these technology protection measures may result in suspension, expulsion, or loss of computer access privileges.

The District reserves the right to monitor and record all use of district technology, including but not limited to, access to the Internet or social media, Internet searches, browsing history, use of artificial intelligence (AI), communications sent or received from district technology, or other uses. Such monitoring/recording may occur at any time without prior notice for any legal purposes including, but not limited to, record retention and distribution and/or investigation of improper, illegal, or prohibited activity. Students should be aware that, in most instances, their district technology (such as web searches and email) cannot be erased or deleted.

Scope of Use

Access to District Internet, equipment, and technology resources is provided to students who agree to act in a responsible, ethical, legal, and safe manner. Before being issued District equipment, or being allowed access to the Internet through District technology resources, students and their parents must sign the Responsible Use Policy Agreement acknowledging their responsibilities. Students must comply with DSUSD standards, in accordance with Board Policy 6163.4, and related policies, and honor this agreement to be permitted to use DSUSD equipment and technology.

1. I am responsible for accessing only educational information to promote learning activities both at school and home while using District devices, accounts, and network.
    - I understand that I may not use the District network or equipment for non-educational (such as personal, political, or commercial) purposes.
    - I will not access or sign up for non-educational related sites or accounts (social media sites, gaming sites, chat rooms, etc.).

2. I am responsible for respecting and maintaining the security of District equipment, electronic resources, and networks.
    - I will not try to bypass security settings and filters, including through the use of proxy servers and VPNs, to access websites blocked by the District.
    - I will not install or use unauthorized software or files, including copyright protected materials, unlicensed software, or apps on any District equipment or devices.

- I will not try to obtain unauthorized information, access information protected by privacy laws, impersonate other users, or falsify location, identity or computer information.
- I will not upload, download, create, or send computer viruses or spyware, attempt to harm or destroy District equipment or materials, or manipulate the data of any other user, including so-called "hacking."
- I will immediately report any security concerns (irresponsible use or potential compromise such as data breach, virus, unauthorized access) to the appropriate authority.

3. I am responsible for using reasonable care when handling District equipment.

- I understand that vandalism and intentional damage in any form is prohibited and subject to school discipline and appropriate criminal or civil action.
- I will report any known or suspected acts of vandalism to the appropriate authority.
- I will respect my and others' use of and access to District equipment.
- I understand that I may be charged a fee for loss or damage to any District equipment or device, and/or damage to any District network, in accordance with District policy.
- I understand that the District makes no warranties of any kind, expressed or implied, for the technology resources it provides for students.

4. I am responsible for treating others with respect and dignity and understand that not all access to the Internet can be supervised.

- I will not access, download, or distribute threatening, obscene, libelous, slanderous, unlawful, sexually explicit, hateful, discriminatory, or harassing digital communications, or engage in sexting.
- I understand that bullying in any form, including cyberbullying, is unacceptable and must be reported to appropriate school personnel.

5. I am aware that filtering technology is not perfect. Although the District uses a software filter to block inappropriate websites and harmful materials, the filter may interfere with legitimate educational purposes and allow some objectionable material to be viewed. I also understand that the District is not responsible for accuracy of information obtained from the Internet or online sources.

6. I am responsible for practicing positive digital citizenship. The District provides annual Digital Citizenship instruction at all grade levels.

- I will practice positive digital citizenship, including appropriate behavior and contributions on websites, discussion boards, media sharing sites, and all other electronic communications, including new technology.
- I will be honest in all digital communication.
- I will not encourage any illegal activity in violation of state or federal laws or regulations.
- I will not encourage the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
- I will not promote unethical activities, such as cheating on assignments or tests. I will not photograph, access, download, upload, or distribute exam questions, exam answers, assignments, or assignment answers without express approval from a teacher or other District employee.
- I understand that what I do and post online must not disrupt school activities or compromise school safety and security.
- I understand that the use of District equipment and technology resources is not private; I should not expect that files stored on or transmitted via the District's resources will be confidential. District employees and other officials may inspect or monitor any digital transmission. Digital storage is District property, and network administrators will review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that I am using technology responsibly.

7. I am responsible for safeguarding personal information.
   - I will not share personal information about myself or others such as names, home addresses, telephone numbers, birth dates, school location, or visuals such as photographs or videos.
   - I will not share personal or confidential information about myself or others such as names, home addresses, email, telephone number, or other personal identifiable information with an open artificial intelligence (AI) system.
   - I will not share my District usernames and passwords with another student.
   - I will not use another user's login or password or attempt to "guess" or "hack" other users' accounts.
   - I will not attempt to read, delete, copy, modify, or use another individual's identity or personal information.
   - I will not delete, rename, or otherwise modify or access others users' folders, work, or files absent their permission.

- I will not adjust the privacy settings on any technology tool or artificial intelligence (AI) application unless directed to do so by a teacher or staff member.
- I will log out of unattended equipment and accounts to maintain security.

8. I am responsible for respecting the works of others.
   - I will follow all copyright (http://copyright.gov/title17/) guidelines.
   - I will not copy or plagiarize the work of another person and represent it as my own.
   - I will properly cite all sources.
   - I will not download illegally obtained music, software, apps, or other works.

Personal Devices

Use of personal devices on the District network is covered by the same rules and policies as District equipment, devices, and technology resources. Pursuant to the District's guidance on artificial intelligence (AI) in schools (*see* https://www.dsusd.us/common/pages/GetFile.ashx?key=5ZDfDMVj), students are prohibited from possessing or using artificial intelligence (AI)-wearing technology such as eyeglasses and pins. Students may not use personal devices in a way that would disrupt class or private study areas. Access to the Internet or other District communication systems from personal technology is limited. However, as prescribed in EC section 48901.7, students shall not be prohibited from possessing or using a smartphone under the following circumstances:

1. In the case of an emergency, or in response to a perceived threat of danger.
2. When a teacher or administrator of the school district, county office of education, or charter school grants permission to a pupil to possess or use a smartphone, subject to any reasonable limitation imposed by that teacher or administrator.
3. When a licensed physician and surgeon determines that the possession or use of a smartphone is necessary for the health or well-being of the pupil.
4. When the possession or use of a smartphone is required in a pupil's individualized education program.

I will use personal technology for instructional purposes as instructed by the teacher and other school staff.

Consequences of Misuse or Violation of this Agreement

Misuse of personal or District equipment, devices, and networks may result in revocation of a student's access to District technology. Misuse includes violation of the law or this RUP Agreement. Misuse may lead to disciplinary and legal action, including suspension or expulsion, or criminal prosecution. Students, parents, and guardians should recognize that the nature of the Use of District technology resources extends outside of the school itself and into off-campus remote locations such as homes. The District's jurisdiction to enforce student behavior and discipline policies and rules apply whether the misuse or violation occurs at school or away from school.

Disclaimer:

Desert Sands Unified School District is not responsible for any damages suffered by the student, including those arising from non-deliveries, misdeliveries, service interruptions, unauthorized use, loss of data, and exposure to potentially harmful or inappropriate material or people. This also includes any loss or damage caused by the use of District internet or resources that causes a personal device to be infected with a virus or other technologically harmful material due to such use of District internet or resources. Use of any information obtained via the Internet or communications technologies is at the student's own risk. Desert Sands Unified School District specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet. The District assumes no liability for personal technology, including computers, smart phones, network access devices, or other electronic signaling devices, if such devices are damaged, lost or stolen. The student and his/her parent/guardian shall indemnify and hold Desert Sands Unified School District harmless from any losses or financial obligations sustained as the result of use or misuse of the District's equipment or technology resources or from third party vendors and sites by the student, or the loss or damage of personal technology.

Use of Mobile Communication Devices

Smartphones and other mobile devices can support learning but may also disrupt instruction and contribute to safety, privacy, and well-being concerns. To protect the learning environment, Desert Sands Unified School District restricts student possession and use of mobile devices during the school day, except in the following circumstances:

- During an emergency or perceived threat of danger, unless explicitly addressed in the school's comprehensive safety plan
- With permission from a teacher or administrator, subject to reasonable limits
- When required for a student's health as documented by a licensed physician
- When required by a student's IEP or Section 504 plan

Devices may not be used in ways that violate the privacy rights of others. Unauthorized use may result in confiscation, a lawful search of the device if warranted, and disciplinary action. Students may also be disciplined for off-campus device use that threatens safety or substantially disrupts school activities. Desert Sands Unified School District is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage to personal mobile devices brought to school or school-sponsored events. (BP 5131.8)