

# Human Resources NEWSLETTER

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### *HR Director's Message*

As we quickly approach the end of the school year, I would like to offer a few reminders about end of year activities.

- Summer Check Out – As part of the end of the school year, it is important that you are responsive in completing necessary end of year check out activities. If you are notified that you need to check in with certain administrative staff prior to the end of school, please be cooperative in doing so before leaving for the summer.
- Classified Performance Evaluations – For classified employees, the schedule of evaluations is dependent on the employee's established evaluation schedule. The schedule for classified employee evaluations is on ELF within the "performance appraisal system for classified employees" procedure. If you are a classified employee, please consult with your supervisor for more information regarding performance evaluations.

I know that y'all are busy and communications from Human Resources are not always at the top of your priority list; so in case you have deleted an email or no longer remember where you filed a piece of paper with the relevant notes on it, here are a few reminders about finding HR-related information.

- All HR policies, procedures, and training are online within ELF. The HR policies are under "TSD Governing Board Policies" and are in "section D." The HR procedures are under "TSD Administrative Procedures" and are in "section D." These should be your first stop if you have administrative questions about HR-related policies or procedures. We in HR are always open to making the administrative procedures more effective and efficient; so if you have recommendations for modifications or revisions, please let us know. HR training presentations and videos (ASL interpreted) are under "TSD Human Resources Training." Any staff or intern can watch training videos there, sign the affidavit, and receive training credit.
- HR uses bulletin boards around campus to communicate HR-related activities. These bulletin boards include legally required posters such as minimum wage information and FMLA-related information. These posters also include information about HR-related activities such as training, the annual charitable campaign, blood drives, etc. Please remember to look at the information on these bulletin boards when you pass by.

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On a personal note, I have greatly appreciated my first year as the Human Resources Director here at Texas School for the Deaf. I am impressed with the talented and committed staff here at TSD and I look forward to the coming school year.

--Matthew Levitt, Human Resources Director

## EMPLOYMENT

### *Summer Program*

All positions available during the 2009 Summer Program and Family Weekend Retreat have been filled. Staff selected for positions will be contacted by their summer supervisors in the upcoming weeks regarding the programs and scheduling for in-service.

### *New Staff*

Between January 20 and May 31, Texas School for the Deaf hired 15 new employees and had 4 employees changing positions. The Human Resources office would like to welcome all of the new employees and congratulate them on their selections.

Oleg Cermak	Bus Monitor	Danielle Patrucker	Night Residential Educator
Veronica Cortez	Teacher Assistant	Sherry Pedersen	Teacher Assistant
Sandra Egan	Substitute Teacher	Dale Pelt	Night Residential Educator
Jody Hamilton	Substitute Nurse	Tonya Pennie	Substitute Teacher Assistant
Alvaro Jimenez	Substitute Teacher/TA	Adrienne Sudolsky	Substitute Nurse
Connie Juarez	Substitute Teacher/TA	Terre Thomas	Bus Driver
Virginia Nester	Substitute Counselor		

## BENEFITS

### *Summer Insurance Notices for Employees who Work Fewer than 12 Months*

HR sent notices the first week of May to employees who will be affected by summer insurance deductions for the months of June and July. Some employees received letters because either the employee is not working summer school or the employee's leave balances are not large enough for insurance to be deducted during the summer months. The letter states how much money will be deducted out of the June 1 check to cover insurance premiums for the summer months. Employees who didn't receive a letter will have deductions taken out as regularly scheduled.

### *"Ready, Set, Retire!"*

If you are planning to retire soon, employees can attend the "Ready, Set, Retire!" presentation. The presentation will cover retirement eligibility, the retirement process, insurance at retirement, and purchasing service credit. The presentation is at 1:30 pm on June 2nd or by webcast on June 2nd at 10:00 am. The presentation will be held in the ERS Auditorium, located on the corner of 18th and Brazos. Free parking is available on the top level of Garage R at 1706 San Jacinto, one block south of the ERS building. To register, go to the Calendar of Events on the [ERS website](#) or call 867-7711 or TDD Line at 867-7731.

### *Summer Open Enrollment*

Summer Open Enrollment for selection of insurance benefits will be July 6 through July 31. This is a change from previous years when summer open enrollment occurred from mid July through mid August. Employees need to make sure they do not miss the summer open enrollment period if they wish to make changes to their benefits.

Employees who want to apply for Health Select, increase their life insurance, add dependents, or add short or long-term disability coverage will need to complete and mail the Evidence of Insurability (EOI) forms to Fort Dearborn Life Insurance Company. EOI applications can be found on the [ERS website](#) in the May 6 article titled "Proof of Good Health." Fort Dearborn Life, (the company that administers life insurance) will begin accepting EOI forms on June 1, 2009.

During Summer Open Enrollment, employees can make changes to their insurance online or can make appointments with Michelle Allen July 6 through July 31. Times available for appointments are Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. To make an appointment please contact Michelle Allen at 462-5316 or by [email](#). If an employee does not want to make any benefits changes, then no action is necessary. More information regarding "how to make summer open enrollment changes online" will be provided in the upcoming weeks.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

### *Summer Career Development*

All staff are welcome to contact the Staff Development Specialist, Ashley Sierant to develop a personalized career development plan. Ashley can be reached via [email](#) or at 462-5323 throughout the year, including the summer months.

### *Free College Tuition*

Deaf Texas residents may be entitled to free tuition at an accredited university/college in Texas. The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) provides a certificate that verifies hearing loss for applicants for tuition waivers at state-supported post-secondary schools in Texas. More information on the Certificate of Deafness for Tuition Waiver is found in Texas Education Code 54.205, on the College for Texans [website](#), or through [DARS](#).

Teacher Assistants and substitutes interested in becoming teachers are also eligible for free tuition at an accredited university/college in Texas. More information can be found at the College for Texans [website](#).

There will be Summer Open Enrollment fairs this summer for employees who want more information on their benefits. All Summer Enrollment fairs are 9 am to noon. Presentations begin at 10 am and last approximately 45 minutes. The dates, locations and times for the fairs are listed on the [ERS website](#).

### *New 403(b) Administrator*

Currently, TSD employees may contribute pre-tax dollars to a 403(b) savings plan. This is done through automatic payroll deduction. Because of new IRS regulations requiring complex user agreements, administration of these 403(b) accounts for TSD employees has been shifted to a third-party administrator. JEM Resource Partners is the company that will be coordinating this. This transition does not affect the way in which an employee contributes to a 403(b). The only change is that employees with questions relating to a 403(b) or who wish to change the contribution amount, etc. should contact JEM directly and not TSD payroll. Please see the attached letter from JEM about the changes. If you have any questions please contact JEM at 800-943-9179 or Michelle Allen at 462-5316 or by [email](#).

### *Deaf Education Programs*

Texas Tech University and Texas Women's University are both accredited and have online deaf education programs that can be completed in approximately one year. Individuals who go through an accredited program may then be eligible for a masters degree along with certification; whereas an Alternative Certification Program (ACP), only offers certification. ACPs are not accredited, so one cannot get a degree or financial aid for them. ACPs usually take about 6 months to a year to complete and usually cost about \$4,000.

### *Requirements for TSD Teachers*

TSD teachers need Deaf Education or Special Education certification, except for distance learning teachers. TSD teachers also need to show No Child Left Behind (NCLB) subject competency for a specific assignment. For example, staff interested in teaching elementary need both Texas Deaf Education or Special Education certification and subject competency in elementary education. Contact [Ashley Sierant](#) for more information.

Subject Competency can be shown either by 24 college hours in the specific area or passing the appropriate TExES exam. The law recently changed so anybody can take the TExES exam at any time, however, this does not make the individual certified. Individuals must go through a pedagogy program to become certified. More information can be found on the Educational Testing Service [webpage](#).

More information regarding certification, visit the Staff Development [website](#).

## **PAYROLL**

### *Contract Staff Payments*

Contract staff have the option to be paid over either 11 or 12 months. The total annual salary will not vary; the employee's salary will merely be allocated over a different number of months. If an employee chooses to be paid over 11 months, the employee is responsible for paying his/her insurance premium for the 12th month, in which the employee does not receive a pay check. The Benefits Coordinator will notify the employee of how to make the premium payments for the month that he/she doesn't work. For contract employees paid over 12 months, this premium is automatically deducted from the employee's check every month. Since an employee paid over 11 months does not receive a pay check for one month out of the year, he/she must pay the insurance premium through a payroll deduction or through HR.

Contract staff who wish to be paid over 11 months must submit a new form to the HR office each school year designating this election. Forms may be picked up in the HR office or staff may email the [Payroll Officer](#) to be sent a form.

The salaries of TSD contract staff are based on salaries of contract staff at Austin Independent School District (AISD). The AISD salary schedule for teachers/librarians can be downloaded from their [website](#).